European University Institute
Department of History and Civilization

Pothiti Hantzaroula

The Making of Subordination: Domestic Servants in Greece, 1920-1945

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of the European University Institute

Florence, November 2002

European University Institute
Department of History and Civilization

Pothiti Hantzaroula

The Making of Subordination: Domestic Servants in Greece, 1920-1945

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of the European University Institute

Examining Jury:
Prof. Luisa Passerini (Kulturwissenschaftlisches Institut Essen), supervisor
Prof. Carolyn Steedman (University of Warwick), co-supervisor
Prof. Regina Schulte (European University Institute)
Prof. Eleni Varikas (Université Paris VII)

Florence, November 2002

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am grateful to the women who participated in this study. Not only did they share their life-stories with me but they also changed me. Without their contribution, cooperation and generosity, this thesis would not have been possible.

I would like to thank the National Foundation of Fellowships in Greece (IKY) and the European Universtity Institute, which awarded me a three year fellowship in 1996 and a completion grant in 1999.

I am deeply greatful to Luisa Passerini, who, as supervisor and teacher, has provided the greatest support, intellectual stimulation, and guidance. To be close to her has been a source of inspiration and a precious experience. Carolyn Steedman has been my mentor since long before the thesis started and as its external supervisor; I cannot thank her enouph. Regina Schulte has introduced me to a new way of thinking about servants and opened new oppurtunities to communicate this work. Working with her has been wonderful. I would like to express my gratitude to Eleni Varikas for having made valuable comments and suggestions.

I am particularly indebted to Christos Billis, Yiannis Kouvas, Christos Marinakis, Stefanos Matthaios, Stelios Othonaios, Maria Pentazou, Michalis Raptis, and Aggelika Psarra who provided enormous help with interview contacts. I would like to thank Stavroula Panidou and Nicos Potamianos for offering material, Kalliopi Mpountouroglou, President of the Confederacy of Greek Women, Konstantinos Danousis, police officer, and Ioannis Tetradis, Director of the Police Headquarter of Piraeus for providing me access to important archival material. I owe a great deal to the Cultural and Intellectual History Society. Had they not embraced me in their group and projects, I would never have followed this path.

I would like to thank my friends, Enrica Capussotti, Ioanna Laliotou, Dimitra Lambropoulou, Davide Lombardo, Ioulia Pentazou, Polymeris Voglis, Katrina Zippel, Daniela Finaldi, and Almut Hoefert for their encouragement, engagement with my work and intellectual exchanges; Dawn Lyon for sharing with me the anxieties of the thesis, for her wonderful friendship, inspiration, and endless discussions; finally, my sister for her loving support.

Orla Sheehy and Jesse Scott have improved the thesis with their language corrections. I thank them.

Table of Contents

PART ONE

Introduction

This thesis is about the experience of domestic service in Athens between 1920-1945. It is based on life-stories of women who worked as domestic servants and explores the ways in which subjects perceived and were constituted through the experience of service. The interviewees are made up of two categories. Firstly, there were internal migrants (born between 1906 and 1925) for whom domestic service was a form of temporary or permanent migration. Secondly, first and second generation refugees from Asia Minor (born between 1916 and 1932) who belonged to the urban population, as they were either born or spent their childhood in Athens.

When I started the thesis, domestic service was perceived as a marginal topic of historical inquiry. Recently, due to a growing interest in domestic service as a topic of research, it has moved from the margins to the centre of historical and sociological inquiry. The disappearance and reappearance of domestic service in scholarly work have followed socio-historical processes as they were both linked to the fall and rise of paid domestic employment in Western European countries. When Anri Besançon wrote "*et aujourd'hui nous ne savons pas encore si la vie culturelle peut survivre à la disparition des domestiques*",[1] he could not have imagined the return of domestic service in the twenty-first century, although in a sense he was proved correct: social life did not survive the disappearance of domestic service. Previous historical accounts used domestic service to understand household patterns in Western European societies or viewed domestic service as part and parcel of the modernizing process. Similarly, in recent accounts, domestic service as a form of labour immigration to first world centres has been put in the framework of the international division of labour and seen as embedded in the specific historical phase of global restructuring and as an important dimension of economic globalization. Immigrant domestic servants have been viewed as the quintessential workers of globalization, as "global servants of global capitalism".[2]

Yet, in these recent accounts, domestic service has served to illuminate in the most profitable manner the dynamics of class, sexuality and race, as well as questions of gender and class identity. The exploration of the above questions in recent accounts and in historical studies, which deal with these questions, has been pursued through the category of experience

---

[1] Quoted in Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (trans. Richard Nice), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984, maxim.

[2] Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*, California, Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 3.

in order to illuminate the effects of positionings and external constructions on the subject.

The thesis aims to investigate the process through which a serving subjectivity was produced in women. The making of the self in the service of others is about a specific subordinate subject position produced in the mistress-servant relationship. Domestic service has been constructed in Greece as a stigmatized identity both by dominant discourses and by notions of labour in the urban working-class community. Silence, disidentification and ambivalence towards the role of the servant are effects of the stigma attached to domestic service and of their positioning in the middle-class household. This research will examine the class politics that existed in the sphere of the house through which subjects were constituted as subordinate.

This study covers the period 1920-1945 and includes the aftermath of the war in Asia Minor as well as the period of the Second World War, periods of both continuity and transition in relation to domestic service. The choice of these dates was not directed by the need to follow a timeframe similar to that of political history, which is shaped by major events or ruptures such as the wars. These emergency situations, the refugee problem and the second world war, restructured the lives of people, mobilized public and private intervention, and reshaped social policy. Domestic service was used formally and informally by public and private institutions as a form of social policy. As the majority of the refugee population were women and children, organizations such as Near East Relief and the Patriotic Institution, which had undertaken the resettlement and welfare of refugees, placed women and children as servants. In the same way, the Patriotic Institution during the Second World War sent needy children to service. However, it was not only the institutions which promoted domestic service, as poor families also used service as a strategy for the survival of children. Thus, it can be argued that a cheap servant labour market was created which catered for those who could not previously afford servants but also led to an increase in the number of servants per household. This workforce was hidden from the censuses, which did not account for children under the age of ten. Furthermore, many children in service were hidden under the term *psychokori* (a term for foster children) which was a widespread practice that concealed the employment and exploitation of children.

Did children in service constitute a new phenomenon in the city? Why did society start to observe and sympathize with these children, and think of them as exploited and suffering? Both working children and servants had been conspicuous in the city since the last quarter of the nineteenth century and they had been seen as sites of regulation and moralization. However, it was only in the twentieth century that they came to be pitied and looked upon as exploited. I will argue that the debate on the exploitation of children in service was part of a

large project in the twentieth century to bestow childhood upon working class children. Although servants were excluded from child labour legislation which prohibited the employment of children under the age of fourteen and although the law was not implemented in industry and workshops, the idea that children should not work was starting to become embedded in society's consciousness. However, juvenile domestic labour was not only a means to launch political demands. It was also a measure of conflict between policies and groups in society which led to the construction of domestic service as a "different" type of employment, as well as of the conditions in which these children lived in the employers' houses.

During the interwar period domestic servants were constructed through various discourses (legislation is the most profound example) as potential thieves and prostitutes. Domestic service proved the most fruitful ground to intervene in both the middle-class and working-class family.

Between 1920-1928, the population of the city of Athens increased by 77%. However, the burgeoning of population should not only be attributed to refugees but also to the inflow of internal migrants. If the successive waves of refugees during the war years constituted a rapture that brought changes to domestic service, there was also continuity. The pace of urbanization had accelerated since the last quarter of the nineteenth century and domestic service was a form of rural migration in which girls predominated. In the 1920s and 1930s, young women from the islands and continental Greece continued to migrate to Athens. In the island of Folegandros the majority of young girls went to service as their mothers had done in earlier years. This trend continued up to the 1960s. Domestic service as a form of rural-to-urban migration reveals a different pattern of service to that of the refugee population and had a different role in the life-trajectory. It was a stage before marriage with the purpose of raising a dowry. For rural migrants, the period in service was longer and for those who did not return to their place of origin a move to factory work did not occur as in the case of refugees. Instead service was continued in the form of day work in offices and houses. The different cultural meanings assigned to domestic labour and to factory work, as well as the role of local networks, accounted for the different choices available to rural migrants and the refugee population.

The focus of this study is not the servant labour market and its operation. While conducting the interviews, I realized the extent to which the life-histories of the interviewees were intertwined with families: their parental family, the employers' family and their own family during their married lives. The parental family, in particular, exercised such influence on interviewees' lives and choices concerning the type of occupation, the age of marriage, the choice of a husband as well as the timing of employment and migration that it seemed to me

necessary to locate family and households in the centre of my analysis. Domestic service operated as a family strategy and as a means for the reproduction of the family. For both rural and refugee girls, the family was the centre of decision-making. The focus on households does not ignore that families operated within the particular historical circumstances which shaped them. Nor does it ignore the importance of war, migration, and the structure of the labour market as well as the role of institutions. On the contrary, the family is a privileged place to trace the intersection of these factors.

Domestic service for both rural migrants and refugees constituted a family strategy. The participation of the interviewees in the labour market thus will be examined in relation to the household context, the local economy, the system of agricultural production, as well as opportunities in the labour market. Understanding the role of domestic service as a family strategy is important in order to examine the process of decision-making in the family. The individual life histories enable us to uncover family strategies and the response of rural and urban communities to opportunities or need. Yet, it was not only economic factors that guided these strategies, there were also cultural as well as emotional considerations. As Tamara Hareven argues, in the historical study of family strategies, the process of decision-making has not been adequately examined. It is at this point that oral history becomes important. It unravels the different levels of participation and accessibility of individual members to collective decisions which range according to age and gender as well as to the life-trajectory of its members.[3] Moreover, it uncovers the unequal distribution of parental care as well as the unequal distribution of resources. One of the aspects of the exercise of parental power was the appropriation of their daughters' earnings.

The study of domestic service has widely served both family history and the history of youth. The relationship between domestic service, family forms and marriage has constituted the typology which enables the understanding of family formation models. It has been argued that domestic service constituted one of the characteristics of the "Western family", a specific type of family structure in north-western Europe, while life-cycle service was peculiar to Western Europe. These assumptions have relied upon quantitative data. In my study, life-stories are used to illuminate the role of domestic service in the life-trajectory and the different ways in which women and children were positioned in domestic service. It is through the life-stories that a link between the geographical and family background, the organization of the family economy, and the operation of the local economy in relation to domestic service can be

[3] Tamara Hareven, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change", *American*

established. They offer accounts of working-class family life that lie outside the existing records and understandings of women's and children's lives.

One of the problems of contemporary historiography on domestic service is the treatment of servants as a collectivity which does.not allow a scope for the complexities and heterogeneity of the experience in service. Furthermore, these studies provide a frozen conceptualization of occupational groups and work identities. In this way, they provide people with a unique work identity. The life-stories offer an insight into the variety of work identities of the individual. In addition, they show that marriage was not a withdrawal from paid labour. It is a common place in Greek historiography to approach female workers as performing temporary employment out of economic necessity from which they withdrew after marriage. In the same way, family history uses a rigid distinction between the stages in the life-trajectory, identifying youth with service and considering marriage as distinct from, or irrelevant to work.

The life-stories are above all about the construction of a serving subjectivity. They reveal that service was an organizing principle in their lives, a way to make sense of themselves. My aim is to explore the process through which this subjectivity was produced. This is not only to explore the process through which the particular experience of domestic service shaped the self in the service of others. The role of the family and the functioning of households are crucial for the understanding of the making of the serving self. It was in the family that girls learned their self-definition as workers. And it was through the instillation of habits such as sacrifice, obedience and discipline that prepared them for domestic service. This study aims to analyze the social and cultural conditions which help to explain the construction of a particular understanding of the self.

Greek historiography has neglected domestic servants. Economic and social historians have been particularly interested in the process of industrialization and in the economic development of Greece. This was an enterprise which was devoted to explaining the so-called "underdevelopment" of the Greek economy as opposed to the ideal type of Western European capitalist economies. The process of proletarianization was considered as the only possible way to capitalist development, while the existence of a substantial proletariat identified by its relation to the means of production produced the working class. According to this reasoning, the studies that deal with women's and children's labour in the industrial sector used this category of employment in order to illustrate the lack of a proletariat (understood as a stable work force in industrial sector). Women's and children's labour was seen as part of family

---

Historical Review, vol. 96, no. 1, 1991, pp. 95-124.

strategies interpreted as expressions of a "society which is characterized by an ambiguous cla disposition".[4] Thus, the great participation of women and children in industry has been seen a an obstacle to the formation of a proletariat and thus of a working class. As a result, bot economic and social historians have concentrated on the operation of the labour market i order either to explain the underdevelopment of Greek industry or of capitalist relations.

The social and cultural meanings of labour are of great importance in understanding th exclusion of domestic servants from the working class and from historiography, but also for th production of one's sense of labour. Domestic servants have been marginalized by multipl discourses which touch upon the issue of consumption and notions of productive labour Judgments of worth applied to occupations introduce criteria of respectable and non respectable forms of labour as well as of scholarly investigation. The fetishization of industria labour constructs other forms of labour as unrespectable. These political ideas about labour no only have damaging effects on the subjects' self-perception and sense of worth by depriving them of a language with which to narrate their story and isolating them from their own selves they also apply criteria as to what counts as oppression. "[W]hat threatens the oppressed and their memory is not solely the oppression itself but the invisibility of oppression, its unacknowledged and unspoken character, that leads them to question their own being and the experiences that are not recognized as oppression "[5].

In dealing with subjects that have been denied a voice in the cultural traditions of contemporaries and largely ignored by historians creates difficulties in respect to the sources and to the analytical framework. In previous historical and sociological analyses, servants were excluded from the working class because they were seen as possessing an inauthentic and imitative subjecthood. This happened because individuals were classified as members of a class by virtue of the position they occupied in social relations. The formation of the working class was seen as a product of economic relations. It was held that once the working class was formed as a class in itself, it should become a political actor either spontaneously or through an external agent, the party. E. P. Thompson tried to rescue the concept of class from its deterministic and frozen conceptualization as a structure and as a position. Thompson's understanding of class formation as a historically and culturally specific experience and the

---

[4] Riginos, Michalis, *Morfes paidikis ergasias sti viomihania kai ti viotehnia 1870-1940*, Geniki Grammateia Neas Genias, Athens, 1995, p. 112. For the identification of the working class with the industrial workforce, see Petros Pizanias, *Oi ftoxoi ton poleon: I texnognosia tis epiviosis stin Ellada to mesopolemo*, Athens, Themelio, 1993, p. 19.

[5] Eleni Varikas, *Me diaforetiko prosopo: Filo, diafora kai oikoumenikotita*, Athens, Katarti, 2000, p. 24.

importance he attributed to the agency of individual people provided a model known as "history from below". In his analysis of class, experience mediated between relations of production and class consciousness.[6] In this formulation experience structured by relations of production is the start of a process that leads to class politics. Thus, Thompson's history presents class as a homogeneous identity because it is generated by relations of production that are common for all workers. The equation between social and political forces legitimizes a particular kind of politics excluding other forms of consciousness and marginalizing other forms of experience that do not lead to class politics.

> [A]ll these forms of homage are unanimous in assuring us that the closer these laborers stick to their collective identity, the more admirable they are; that they become suspect when they choose to love other than as legions and legionnaires, to claim for themselves the errant ways of individuality reserved for the egotistical 'petty bourgeois' gentleman or the fanciful 'ideologist'.[7]

Women's and children's experience has been assigned to the private sphere, which has been constructed as immune from the market and class conflict. The history of women's and children's labour runs parallel to the dominant narrative of class formation and class struggle. The marginalization of children and women is not seen as a problem of class politics or of the historian's formulation of the concept of class. In this way, the story of class formation through class struggle is naturalized and is seen as an adequate explanatory model. As Joan Scott argued, the difference in the relationship of women with politics and exclusion of other forms of experience are not seen as the result of the conceptualization of class politics but as products of social and material arrangements.[8] Joan Scott analyzed the process through which class has been structured as a gendered category. "Work, in the sense of productive activity determined class consciousness, whose politics were rationalist; domesticity was outside production and it compromised or subverted class consciousness. The antitheses were clearly coded as masculine and feminine; class in other words, was a gendered construction".[9] Feminist historiography has approached the position of women in the labour market and their exclusion from class politics

---

[6] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin 1980 (Ist ed. 1963), p. 9.

[7] Jacques Rancière, *The Nights of Labour: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (trans. John Dury), Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989, p. x.

[8] Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience", *Critical Inquiry*, no. 17, Summer 1991, p. 785.

[9] Joan Scott, "Women in the Making of the English Working Class", *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 79

as an outcome of the separation of spheres and their allocation in the private sphere.[10] Another strand of social history has viewed the exclusion of women from class politics not as a result of women's and children's allocation to the private but as an outcome of their subordinate position in the division of labour and of masculine ideas about work in the working class.[11] The exploration of domestic service shows the infusion of the public into the private and reveals that the house was not immune from class conflict. Furthermore, the subordination of women in the family constructed along gender lines denied an autonomous identity to women and subjected them to family needs. Their participation in the labour market was both defined by the gendered politics of the family as well as by gender ideologies about appropriate labour for women.

Feminist historians within the tradition of the new social history have incorporated the experiences of women and children and have written a history of working class women which runs parallel to mainstream working class history. On the other hand, historians who have inserted gender into the history of class formation have described the development of a new gendered subjectivity for middle class women. In addition, they have analyzed how working class women were assigned to the private sphere and excluded from class politics.[12]

But what has been neglected by historians who introduced the category of gender in the analysis of class formation is the development of a different kind of selfhood for working class women (and men) and their attempts to achieve a consciousness for themselves shaped by the society they lived in.[13] If "class happens in human relationships"[14] and "people experience their experiences as feeling"[15], as Thompson argued, then it is important to explore the structure of feeling and the kind of selfhood that was produced through the understanding of the experience of service. What role did their relationship with their mistresses play in the formation of their identity, and how was their sense of themselves was shaped by their relationship with middle class women. The intention to deal with the organization of feelings around perceptions of inequality and subordination requires entering into the arena of subjectivity.

---

[10] For the position of women in the Greek labour market, see, Effi Avdela, *Dimosioi ipalliloi genous thilikou Katamerismos tis ergasias kata fila sto dimosio tomea, 1908-1955*, Athens, Idrima Erevnas kai Paideias tis Emporikis Trapezas tis Ellados, 1990, p. 27.

[11] Kostas Fountanopoulos, "Ergasia kai ergatiko kinima sti Thessaloniki, 1908-1936", Athens 1998 [unpublished PhD thesis], pp. 142-150.

[12] For the delineation of historical works which wrote gender into the history of class formation, see Carolyn Steedman, "The Price of Experience: Women and the Making of the English Working Class", *Radical History Review* 59, 1994, p. 111-113.

[13] Ibid, p. 114.

[14] Thompson, *The Making*, p. 8

[15] Quoted in Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience", p. 784.

Dealing with subjectivity enables the exploration of the relationship between individual and social relations, between individuals and the culture they inhabit. The term subjectivity is used to refer to the unconscious and fantasmatic as well as to the cognitive and cultural dimensions of the experience of human beings.[16] Oral history allows working class women's subjectivity to enter into working class history and enables the exploration of the complexity of the formation of subjectivity, the articulation and feeling of identity, the antagonisms produced in relationships and the inscription of power on subjects. Thus, it is concerned with the coexistence of coercion and freedom, inheritance and critique.[17]

[16] See for the definition Luisa Passerini, "Work Ideology and Consensus Under Italian Fascism", *History Workshop Journal*, no. 8, 1979, p. 85 and Barbara Taylor, " Religion, Radicalism and Fantasy", *ibid.*, no. 39, Spring 1995, p. 108.

[17] Passerini, "Work Ideology...", p. 104.

Chapter One

Literature Review: Historical and Sociological Research on Domestic Service

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with historical studies on domestic service in the Western European context, and includes three areas of research: family studies, research which treats domestic service as part of the modernizing process, and studies which approach domestic service as a relationship. The second part reviews historical and sociological research which explores domestic service from the perspective of class, gender, race, and sexuality.

I. Family History

Historical research on the family has its roots in several disciplines. Historical demography, by inserting domestic service in the field of family history, has enabled the elucidation of family forms, marriage patterns and households in pre-industrial societies, as well as in societies undergoing changes in the process of industrialization and modernization. It has been argued that delayed marriage and life-cycle service contributed to the advent of capitalism and to the Industrial Revolution. While the continuity of the nuclear household structure challenged assumptions of industrialization and modernization theory, the presence of "life-cycle" servants pointed to the fluidity of households. Thus, although the reliance on census household schedules and the examination of the "structural function of the family in the pre-industrial world"[1] provided a static view of the household, life-cycle servants demonstrated the flexibility of households of the past. These studies led scholars to consider domestic service as a field of inquiry worthy of study in itself. The questions which shaped the analysis of domestic service from the point of view of family history centre upon factors such as the age of entering service, the age of marriage of servants, their occupational and social mobility, and the age and gender composition of domestic service employment. These questions are mainly pursued through the use of census results and focus on the formal structure of households.

One of the major streams of family history has employed the demographic approach, and can be distinguished into those studies which use a quantitative analysis and those integrate the demographic analysis with a qualitative approach. The interest in domestic service and the centrality of service for historians of the family arose out of the consideration of

servants as members of the family and the domestic community. Historians of the family have considered domestic service as indispensable for the understanding of household formation patterns. It has been argued that the availability of servant labour accounts for differences in the organisation of both family and rural economies. The relationship between domestic service, family forms and marriage has constituted the typology which enables the understanding of family formation models.[2] Peter Laslett has connected his analysis of the nuclear households in pre-industrial societies with John Hajnal's thesis on the Western marriage pattern and developed a specific type of family structure, the "Western family". This Western family type had among other characteristics the presence of life-cycle servants in the household. "Life-cycle servant" was a term used to describe a fundamental characteristic of the institution of service in north-western Europe in the pre-industrial period and it was used to describe servants who were found in service in a particular stage of their life-cycle, that from biological maturity until marriage.[3] As a consequence, historical demography has used domestic service to strengthen the uniqueness of the European family in the pre-industrial situation.

In the context of this debate social historians have questioned the value of the quantitative approach and have demonstrated the limitation of the use of quantitative methods and analyses which do not allow a scope to explore the subject. They have argued that statistical analysis, using structural criteria of the household classification, does not take into account the wider socio-historical conditions and does not allow consideration of individual strategies in life-planning. Michael Mitterauer has discussed the problems of statistical data, such as *stati d'anime*.[4] Autobiographical narratives reveal the inefficiency of *stati d' anime* to throw light on the motivations of subjects and family strategies. One of the major questions of demographic history is the age of entering service. Mitterauer has demonstrated through autobiographical sources that there was no "normal age" for entering service. Autobiographical testimonies can clarify the individual and familial reasons for entering service. Angiolina Arru explores the Italian servant labour market in nineteenth century in respect of migration patterns and marriage models combining a quantitative approach with qualitative analysis. She focuses

---

[1] Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, p. 20.

[2] For the elaboration and application of the model see Richard Wall, Jean Robin and Peter Laslett (eds), *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983; also Giovana Da Molin, "Family Forms and Domestic Service in Southern Italy from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries", *Journal of Family History*, vol. 15, no 4, 1990.

[3] Peter Laslett, "Servi e servicio nella struttura sociale europea", *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 68, no 2, 1988, p. 349.

[4] Michael Mitterauer, "Servi nelle Alpe", *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 68, no 2, 1988, p. 451-2.

on marriage, age and sex in order to illustrate the life strategies of servants in their communities, cities and families[5]. In her analysis the rules of the market is the underlying factor that accounts for servants' choices. Marriage and migration are considered as a result of the organization of the labour market and the labour-oriented strategies of servants.[6] In these studies, which combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches, autobiographical testimonies are not used on equal terms with quantitative data but to complement the quantitative method. Therefore, the quantitative approach remains the central methodological tool within this strand of family history that deals with domestic service. The qualitative analysis is framed by the questions and objectives of the demographic approach, thus testing the validity of the statistical data.

II. Servants and Modernization

Secondly, labour historians have dealt with domestic service as part of the modernizing process. Theresa McBride and Carmen Sarasùa have approached domestic service as a bridging occupation that facilitated the integration of the rural poor within the urban labour market. [7] According to McBride, service was an attractive area of employment because it provided young women with a respectable occupation that gave them the opportunity to accumulate considerable savings.[8] During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, domestic service was transformed into a predominantly female occupation and became "the major setting for female urban force participation during the transitional stages of industrialization". Domestic service was considered as a significant aspect of the modernization process, which led to feminization of domestic service and migration of significant numbers of women to the urban centers. Sarasùa argued that service permitted the ascent of men in the social scale while it functioned as a refuge for women.[9] Leonore Davidoff regarded service as a stage of the life cycle, while D. A Kent argued that service was attractive for some women as a way of life and not simply as a stage in their life cycle on the grounds that it provided a form of economic independence and enabled servants to spend their earnings autonomously.[10] Edward Higgs, in

---

[5] Angiolina Arru, "The Distinguishing Features of Domestic Service in Italy", *Journal of Family History*, vol.15, no 4, 1990, p. 548.

[6] Ibid., p. 554 and 563.

[7] Theresa McBride, *The Domestic Revolution: The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920*, p. 83; Carmen Sarasùa, *Criados, nodrizas y amos: El servico doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño, 1758-1868*, 1994, p. 263.

[8] McBride, *Domestic Revolution*, p. 90, 97

[9] Sarasùa, *Criados*, p. 236-241.

[10] Leonore Davidoff, "Domestic Service and the Working-Class Life Cycle", *Society for the study of*

examining domestic service in a local context, attempted to revise the image of domestic service both as part of the paraphernalia of the gentility and as a bridging occupation. He argued that urban girls with access to factory work avoided domestic service because they regarded it as degrading labour.[11] Rural girls continued to enter into service, but the decline of the rural population accounted for the decline of domestic service at the end of the nineteenth century.[12] Furthermore, servants did not appear to be socially mobile.

Bridget Hill's work on eighteenth-century English domestic workers is, to a major extent, a response to the social betterment thesis, according to which domestic service compared with other occupations for the labouring poor it offered the possibility of a career.[13] Hill argues that the advantages and disadvantages of domestic service should not just be measured in terms of financial reward, security, or in the possibility of promotion. It is important to take into account the loss of independence, a sense of identity and self-respect that the experience of domestic service involved.[14] The work consists of a collection of essays, a form that enables her to deal with the multilateral aspects of the experience of service. It covers a variety of themes concerning servants' experiences in service, such as the treatment of relatives as servants, sexual exploitation, philanthropy and service, vials and perquisites. A major part of the book is devoted to the servants' own stories, such as the autobiography of Mary Ashford and poetry. Additionally, literary servants are discussed in this book. Hill illustrates the power of the upstairs/downstairs model on the public imagination and on the research that has been carried out on domestic servants. She argues that the majority of servants during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were employed in small households and they were usually referred to as "general" servants. However, the author's most important claim is that the Third World experience of domestic service might provide important insights into the way domestic service has been understood in Western Europe.

III. The Master-Servant Relationship

The third area of research concerns the literature which explores the relationship between masters and servants. Cissie Fairchilds and Sara Maza explored the relationship between

---

labour history, no 26, Spring 1973; D. A. Kent, "Ubiquitous but Invisible: Female Domestic Servants in Eighteenth Century London", *History Workshop Journal*, no 28, 1989, p. 112.

[11] Edward Higgs, "Domestic Service and Household Production" in Angela John (ed.), *Unequal Opportunities Women's Employment in England 1800-1918*, p. 142-3.

[12] Ibid., 144.

[13] Bridget Hill, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1996.

[14] Ibid., p. 93.

masters and servants in the social and cultural context of eighteenth century France.[15] Sar Maza was the first to point out that service is first and foremost a relationship and thus set th relationship between masters and servants at the center of her analysis. Considering service i the Old Regime as a socio-political institution, Maza analysed the system of service by placin it in the framework of the wider political and economic institutions and exploring the ideolog that supported the system of service. For Maza masters and servants were locked into a systen of paternalistic relations which transcended the arbitrariness of individual personality and lif history. The poverty and the sexual and economic vulnerability of domestic workers, combinec with their origins as migrants and the isolation which was reinforced by the peculiarities o their occupation, account for the identification of servants with their masters and the acceptance of the norms set by them.[16] Masters maintained control over servants through distance, by ensuring that they were continually and efficiently occupied, by separating them from one another and restricting their mobility both inside and outside the household. Servants served to display the power of their masters in public and they represented the living symbols of their employers' status.[17] The master-servant relationship, Maza argued, had an impact outside the household on society. The public function of the institution of service, and the role of servants as mediators to protect the dignity and power of their superiors were supported by the loyalty which was expected from and displayed by servants. Loyalty was the norm that governed domestic service under the Old Regime. One of the basic aims of this work is to explain the uses and meanings of the loyalty that was demanded of servants. Maza concluded that the primary role of servants was to convince the public of their masters' superiority.

Maza's work on servants demonstrates the utility and richness of an interdisciplinary approach. It is inspired by both the new cultural history and anthropology. However, the limitation of the sources has not been adequately discussed in the book nor has it been acknowledged the extent to which a particular type of sources and the lack of others has shaped the handling of the story. Consequently, the lack of what have been termed "ego documents" (autobiographies, diaries, memoirs) of servants is obscured by the methodological statement that the history of mentalities transcends the individual subjects of history and life history. Maza's analysis is influenced by structural anthropology rather than cultural anthropology and history, which leads her to handle the institution of domestic service and the relationship

[15] Cissie Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies: Servants and Their Masters in Old Regime France*, The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984, and Sara Maza, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1983.
[16] Maza, *Servants and Masters*, p. 154.

between servants and masters as a rather closed system of authority that manifests the masters' superiority and power.

Fairchilds relied on psychological theories in order to analyse relationships between masters and servants and perceives service as a depersonalising experience. She argued that servants rejected their own backgrounds and personalities and devoted themselves completely to their masters. They adopted their masters' value systems in order to adjust to the world of the elite and to compensate for the humiliation they encountered in their employers' household.[18] Fairchilds argued that masters and servants were bound to one another by the patriarchal vision of authority. Patriarchy rested upon the authority of the father, which became the model of authority for the whole society. According to Fairchilds, service was the laboratory for social attitudes. She argued that masters' opinions of the lower classes had probably grown out of their contacts with their servants. The intimate relations between servants and masters in the patriarchal household have been considered as a reflection of and as factor which shaped social attitudes in the *ancien regime.*

The European historiography on domestic service we have examined has approached servants as collectivities, as aggregated numbers that provide evidence of family models, patterns of migration, and the experience of youth. Even the historiography which deals with the relationship between masters and servants has treated masters as individuals, using diaries and pocket books for sources, while, in contrast, the research on servants has been based on statistical data and police archives, thus treating servants collectively and concentrating on how others have treated, viewed and exploited them. This approach is part of a wider scholarly thinking which treats the working-class as the masses, thereby denying them the status of a subject, and reserving individuality for the bourgeoisie.

Labour historians viewed domestic service as a pattern of favourable and unfavourable transitions. Those who regard service as an advantageous occupation measure the benefits in terms of financial rewards, security and chances of social betterment. Conversely, some historians view service as a necessity due to the lack of alternative employment and indicate that the sexual exploitation and vulnerability of servants, their isolation in the employers' household and their rural background explain the disadvantages of service and account for their acceptance of the norms created by the masters. On the other hand, historians who have been concerned with the master-servant relationship presented service as a total institution that stripped servants of their identity and as a system implemented by masters and accepted by

---

[17] Ibid., p. 195.

servants. However, there is a discrepancy in the way in which servants and masters have been approached. Servants have been analysed as a collective group, while masters have been analysed as individual human beings. This is reflected in the different kind of sources used for servants and masters. Servants' stories were written mainly out of statistical data while letters, memoirs, household manuals and cookbooks are the sources used for the reconstruction of masters' story. Consequently, historians who have discussed the master-servant relationship have dealt principally with the ways masters established and maintained control, and also the ways in which they disempowered servants.

IV. The Politics of Identity: Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality

Historical and sociological research on domestic service are considered together in this section as they share common approaches and raise similar questions. These works have been developed within the wider framework of the debates of feminism and identity politics and have been largely shaped by the methodologies and the questions that these politics and disciplines seek to answer. They set the questions of gender, race and class at the centre of their interest and are structured around an analysis of gender, race and class hierarchies.

a. The Use of the Case-Study: The Diaries of Hannah Cullwick and Arthur Munby

Leonore Davidoff, Ann McClintock and Liz Stanley invoke the relationship between an upper-class man, Arthur Munby, and the Victorian maidservant, Hannah Cullwick to investigate the intersection between class, gender and sexuality in nineteenth century Victorian society. Leonore Davidoff's aim is to illuminate the process through which gender and sexuality shaped class identities in Victorian era: "Certainly, in Western tradition, gender has operated as a fundamental organizing category at the level of both social relations and the structure of personal identity"[19].

Davidoff embarks upon this inquiry by delineating the world-view of Victorian society which was characterized by sex, race and class dichotomies such as male/female, upper/lower, white/black, clean/dirty, and Munby-Massa/Hannah-slave. Within this dichotomy, bodily functions and sexuality were removed from the public gaze while gender meanings were mapped out on the grid of the human body. In this body imagery, the adult middle-class man was seen as the "Head" of his household but also of the social system. Middle-class women

[18] Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, p. 102-7.
[19] Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 7.

represented the "Heart" while the "Hands" were the unthinking and unfeeling doers without identity, sex or age.

Davidoff identifies a split image of women in Victorian society, in a dichotomy between "woman" and "lady", working class and middle class, which was embedded in the division of labour in the middle-class household. Middle-class women were responsible for the respectability of the household while the heavy and dirty tasks as well as the physical care of children became the domain of domestic servants. Moreover, the social division and dichotomies of Victorian society were also reflected in the spatial segregation of middle-class houses. The servants lived and worked in the dark underground parts of the house which in the bourgeois language were referred to as the "back passages" and represented the "nether world", thus carrying connotations of dirt, disorder and shame. This spatial topography was at the same time a social topography and the servants who worked in these spaces were sexualized and seen as polluted.

Davidoff's second aim is to show what happens when these ideas become part of the everyday life of people. She uses the relationship between Munby and Cullwick in order to illustrate how the gendered ideas that permeated Victorian society were incorporated into everyday life. Furthermore, she explores how gender and class ideas informed Munby's identity and the ways he manipulated these ideas in order to create a meaningful identity for himself. Although Davidoff aims to show they way gender and sexuality shape class identities, she pursues this question through the voice of Munby, employing his private diary, letters, drawings and photographs as her principal sources.

Davidoff uses Munby's diaries to test the dominant ideas of Victorian society and identifies the major themes and dichotomies of Victorian culture through his diaries: Munby's obsession with observing and collecting information on working class women was seen in relation to the collection of information and statistical data commissioned by official bodies which were gathered to respond to public inquiries and to control the working-class population. Furthermore, his obsession with hands and menial work, along his dislike for those who tried to rise above their status, such as shop assistants and female clerks was also consistent with contemporary Victorian ideas, as too was his city/country division.

The problem with this kind of reading is evident when Davidoff tries to make a similar assessment of Victorian ideas through Cullwick's diaries. She reads Cullwick's diaries through Munby's eyes, in the sense that she presupposes that the dominant ideas of Victorian society have exactly the same meaning for all individuals irrespective of their social background. Davidoff very quickly dismisses Cullwick's diaries as a source of identity by treating them as a

mere reflection of Munby's power and control. "All this happens at the will of the m protagonist who creates the situation and engineers the transformation".[20] Davidoff vie Cullwick as an object of Munby's pleasure, as a product of his class and gender fantasy a concludes that Hannah's diaries, and her subjectivity in the end, were the product of Munb requests, shaped by his efforts to manipulate her labour and to perform his voyeuris illusions. Thus, the status of the subject and the possession of a self is denied to Cullwick well as the ability to construct her subjectivity through the use of elements of Victorian cultur ideas.

Finally, Davidoff reproduces the hierarchical divisions of Victorian society by treatir Munby as an individual, while reducing Cullwick to a representative of an occupational grou deprived not only of agency, but even of the ability to think. In this understanding, Cullwick diary is seen as a source of information about the conditions of servant labour rather than as source of Cullwick's identity. "This makes Hannah Cullwick's diary, with its detailed record c childhood memories, conditions of work and work performed, wages, hours, recreation relationships among fellow servants, and many other details, a unique and precious documen However, it must be remembered that she was writing it for Munby's eyes alone, a further wa in which he could dominate and even create her life».[21] Davidoff equates the ideas whic permeated the minds of dominant groups in society with Cullwick's understanding of herse and of her relationship with Munby. In this way, the working-class subject disappears onc more from the historical analysis and Davidoff writes out the maid in the same way Freu wrote her out from the family model and the Oedipus complex.

McClintock and Stanley have questioned the idea that Cullwick was a product o Munby's desires and manipulations and thus a victim of the gender ideologies and politics of nineteenth-century Victorian society and have set as their task to find out what kind of agency is possible in situations of extreme inequality. Resistance and agency are the main operative concepts in understanding Hanna Cullwick's relationship to Munby and her labour. Both of these authors try to restore agency and see Hannah's diaries as an emanation of the liberated self.

McClintock employs the concept of fetish as an analytic category in order to understand cross-gender and cross-class as well as inter-gender relationships. Fetish is the key linking psychoanalysis to what she calls material history. McClintock argues that by situating the analysis of fetish in the historical context of the nineteenth century it is possible to illuminate

[20] Davidoff, *Worlds*, p. 123.

the relation between fetishism, domesticity and empire. For McClintock both Munby and Cullwick operated in the realm of fetish, thus she explores the meanings of rituals they performed, such as cross-dressing, boot counting, hand fetishism, infantilism, and bondage. It was the dichotomy between women's labour and its undervaluation by Victorian society and women's unpaid work in the home that animated Cullwick's and Munby's fetishism. Concerning Cullwick, these fetish rituals are interpreted by McClintock as an attempt to negotiate the boundaries of power and document instances of social agency and cultural resistance. In the same way, the photographic fetish reveals an alternative narrative of female agency and power.

McClintock continues her analysis by exploring Cullwick's relation to marriage, motherhood and domestic labour through Cullwick's own words. Cullwick was deeply reluctant to marry Munby and she never lived as a lady with him. When Munby presented the marriage license, Cullwick told him how "very very little I cared for the license or being married either". In another entry she wrote, "I made my mind up that it was best and safest to be a slave to a gentleman, nor wife and equal to any vulgar man". Afterwards she was ambivalent to live with him and she continued to perform service labour requesting her wages. McClintock interprets Cullwick's ambivalence towards marriage and femininity, "It is too much like being a woman", as a refusal to be a man's legal possession and as an act of independence from the bonds of marriage. Servant labour is elevated to an emancipatory enterprise, while her refusal of motherhood is seen as an outburst of feminism and as expression of the liberated self: "She refused the 'grand idea of the nineteenth century' by choosing the value of her work over the muffled ennui and bondage of marriage". Thus, in the end, McClintock celebrates Hanna's ambivalence regarding her femininity and her refusal of ladyhood as a liberating act from the constraints of femininity. This interpretation seems to reflect more the agonies and anticipation of the twentieth century subject immersed in gender consciousness than Cullwick's subjectivity. The outcome is that the historical specificity of Cullwick's subjectivity is lost in the identification of the scholar with the subject of her inquiry.

Both McClintock and Liz Stanley have attempted through the reading of Munby's and Cullwick's diaries to present the ambivalence of the subordinate subject and not to use Cullwick as an illustration of a unified subjectivity. They have both attempted to bestow agency upon Cullwick and they have both convincingly argued that servant labour provided a

---

[21] Davidoff, *Worlds*, p. 117.

space of freedom for women and a source of self-esteem. Servant labour offered Cullwick the opportunity to refuse motherhood and to avoid reproducing the material conditions of her existence, as well as the image of womanhood provided to her by society. This image of womanhood was for Cullwick tied to the idea of motherhood.[22] Carolyn Steedman has discussed in an illuminating way feminist theories of motherhood in which psychoanalytic insights are supported and informed by sociological descriptions of mothering. Writing in the context of these discussions, Steedman offers a historical understanding of the social specificity of how the desire to reproduce oneself and the failure of this desire is produced in working-class girls. She argues that the motives and the reasons for not wanting to have children, the anxiety and trouble that the actual possession of children would cause in the case of Cullwick, should be considered as different from the lack of a desire to have children and from the way this desire is produced in women. Thus, Cullwick's social understanding and the feelings about having children must be separated by her recognition of not feeling like a woman. Cullwick's recognition of not feeling like a woman has to be related to the refusal to reproduce herself and the circumstances of her life. This refusal to reproduce oneself has to be searched in the social relationship between mothers and daughters, in the process of socialization of girls by their mothers, and has to be supported by a different kind of evidence.

The questions that Cullwick's diaries raise can not be reduced to the simple dilemma of whether she was a product and a creation of Munby, as Davidoff argues, or whether she was a woman of power, "a kind of unyielding wall of woman, who in a sense played Munby like he was a fish on the end of her line".[23] In this preoccupation of scholars with discovering "who speaks" in Cullwick's diaries, what is obscured and dismissed is the form of subjectivity produced through Cullwick's autobiographical writing and the process through which she came to an understanding of herself and a possession of a story through the act of writing.[24]

Liz Stanley makes an important distinction between the "doing" and the "being" aspects of class. In Stanley's elaboration of this "dual vision" of subordinate groups, "being" means belonging to the working class, while "doing" indicates a possession, and a knowledge of being working class that subordinate groups use to achieve empowerment, in order to resist, effect, influence, control the relationship of labour. It is this possession and articulation of a particular understanding of the self that constitutes the texture of subjectivity. In Cullwick's case it was

---

[22] Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, p. 85.

[23] Liz Stanley, *The Auto/Biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Autobiography*, Manchester University Press, 1992, p. 169.

[24] Carolyn Steedman's remarks in the seminar on working-class autobiography at Warwick University.

the process of learning her position in the world as produced through the institutions of family, school and service and the sharpening reworking, and articulation of a particular structure of feeling that was the outcome of the experience of her relationship with an upper-class man. Moreover, it is Cullwick's ambivalent position as a servant and as a partner to an upper-class man, the opportunity she had to step outside the position of the servant and above all the writing of the self that made possible the articulation of her subjectivity.

b. Research on Domestic Service in the United States

The research on domestic servants in the United States has revolved around the issue of housework and the gendered divisions in the domestic sphere, concerns that have been on the agenda of American feminism for a long time. Domestic service has been used by scholars as a tool to challenge notions of sisterhood and to unravel the racial and class inequality that is embedded in the relationship between domestic workers and their employers. What has been stressed is that paid domestic work is a social relationship between women. It is a social arrangement between women from different economic and social backgrounds, and it is women who select, pay and supervise household workers.

The works reviewed here deal mainly with research on domestic service in the twentieth century. It is by no means an exhaustive review of the existing work on domestic service. The books selected are representative, I believe, of a body of scholarship which has used innovative approaches and methodologies in order to explore the development of domestic employment in an industrialized society and how race, class, and gender relations are shaped through the contact between mistresses and maids. The development of a new ideology, the cult of domesticity, has redefined middle-class housewives' duties and has led to the unfolding of new social relationships. The scholarly work on domestic service in the United States has also explored the role of servants in the formation of middle-class identity.

Bonnie Thornton Dill, Judith Rollins, Glenn Nakano, Mary Romero, and Phyllis Palmer explore domestic service in the United States. Their books are an important contribution to the discussion on U.S. minority women employed as domestics. The cases of Chicana, African American, and Japanese American women indicate a shift from live in domestic work to day work, which challenges the "ideal type" of a domestic worker: young, unmarried, rural migrant or immigrant who use domestic service as a bridge to an urban environment and as a stepping stone to upward mobility. The overrepresentation of women of colour and immigrant women from Third World countries reflects the racial and gender hierarchies which are embedded and

reproduced in the labour market. The racial and ethnic stratification that marked domestic service accounts for a major difference in the experience of domestic service in the United States as opposed to the European. By examining discriminatory institutional practices, the educational system which assisted and reproduced rigid occupational stratification and by comparing the mobility experience of native-born white women with those of immigrant and minority women, scholars have shown how race and class have locked women of colour in low status and low paying jobs such as domestic service.[25] Furthermore, they have pointed out that although opportunities in life are defined by sexism, all women do not suffer sexism equally. Class interests of middle-class Anglo women and race have limited the chance of women of colour for upward mobility and from establishing similar interests as white middle-class women based on gender.

These authors seem to agree that the major change in domestic service from live-in to day work, which was an outcome of the shortage of domestic workers which provided the opportunity for household workers to gain a measure of autonomy, allowed space for negotiation with employers and that day work was a preferable type of employment for working-class women of colour which have limited occupational opportunities due to racial and class factors. Compared with factory work and other low-status occupations, day work seemed to offer more autonomy and flexibility in work schedules and higher wages. Domestics gained negotiating power and, consequently, were able to influence employer-employee relations. As the division of housework runs along gender lines and working class women are faced with a "double day", day work fit in well with women's responsibilities for child care and household chores.

A central preoccupation of these works is a confrontation with issues of housework and the exploitative relationship between paid domestic workers and white female employers. The authors agree that feminism has mainly dealt with unpaid housework and the structural aspects of the division of labour in the household. The shared experiences in the housewife role have been seen by feminists in the 1960s and 70s as uniting all women. Feminism has not dealt with the exploitation and privilege that the relationship between household workers and employers involves which is the outcome of the ability of middle-class women to hire working-class women or women of colour to do the housework. As Mary Romero argues, paid housework is structured to replicate the unpaid work of the housewife while the personal relationships

[25] Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1986, pp. 4-8.

between employee and employer blur the distinctions between paid and unpaid housework.[26] Her argument is that the sexist division of labour that exists in employers' homes is passed on to the domestics and in this way middle-class women employers reproduce the demeaning and sexist aspects of housework. Furthermore, middle-class homemakers' struggles to escape the drudgery of housework have been intertwined with racial politics.

All four works depart from previous accounts on domestic service by using interview and life-history methodologies in order to gain knowledge of the structure of the work, the dynamics of the employer-employee relationship and the role of race, class, ethnicity, and immigration in shaping job opportunities and the relationship between domestics and their employers. These scholars have shown through the use of oral life-histories how race and class are socially constructed through relations of power. The life-history material constitutes an innovative approach which challenges previous work on domestic service, in which domestic servants used to appear as variables representing sectors of the population.

Bonnie Thornton Dill's *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class* is based on twenty six interviews with African-American women who migrated from the South to the Northeast during the 1920s and 1930s to work as domestic servants. Dill's sample captures an important period for domestic service, as her interviewees entered domestic service during the transformation of live-in service into day work. Her aim is to explore how the organization and structure of housework as a woman's territory influenced the job responsibilities of these women and their family obligations. The book focuses on the women's perceptions about their relationships with their employers and the ways in which they conceptualized class and racial inequities between themselves and their employers. Dill discusses the notion of "maternalism" which was used in literature on domestic service and denoted the benevolent and patronizing attitudes of employers. She argues that racial differences were an obstacle in the exercise of maternalism on the part of employers and rather that domestic workers appeared in many cases to "mother" their employers. Dill suggests that women resisted mistresses attempts to subsume them into their families either by choosing day work or by using weapons such as patience, negotiation, craftiness, observation, imitation, and criticism. Women were aware of the low status of the occupation but struggled for dignity in the intimate relationship with their employers and tried to gain autonomy and control over their tasks. Furthermore, they tried to resist employers' objectification and depersonalizing attitudes towards them, which they experienced in their first jobs, by choosing employers who display human and personal

[26] Mary Romero, *Maid in the USA*, New York, 1992, p. 130-131.

recognition and treat an employee with dignity.

Bonnie Thornton Dill concludes that class and race defined women's position in the labour market. She argues that African-American private household workers faced discrimination in the market place and they were deprived of job opportunities compared with non-Black immigrant and native-born women. They were paid less and even in low-status occupations their opportunities were limited. Dill finds the roots of the overrepresentation of African-American domestic service in the South in slavery, which created racial and class hierarchies through white masters' absolute access to the services of African-American women. The interviewees' feelings and experiences reflected the low position of domestic service in the social structure and its identification with menial and degrading labour. However, part of the reason for the stigma attached to domestic service was its identification with immigrants and Blacks. Thus, racial and class hierarchies operated to maintain the worker's inferior position and were factors that restricted their life chances.

Mary Romero's book investigates the situation of Chicana domestic workers through the use of life-histories of twenty-six domestic workers in Colorado. The choice of women domestics of Mexican descent born in the United States is led by Romero's intention to contribute to the discussion on U.S. minority women employed as domestics and to compare her findings of the experiences of Chicana domestics with those of African American and Japanese American women. One of the major aims of the book is to challenge the notion of "sisterhood" and seeks to illustrate that domestic service "accentuates the contradictions of race and class in feminism, with privileged women of one class using the labor of other women to escape aspects of sexism"[27]. Romero draws the same conclusion as Phyllis Palmer that reproductive labour must be recognized as society's work while strategies have to be developed so that the social burden of reproductive labour does not fall disproportionally on the shoulders of any group.

Romero adopts a Marxist-structural approach in order to analyze domestic service in a capitalist economy. She argues that the domestic-employer relationship should not be seen as a continuation of pre-industrial, feudalistic master-servant tradition but analyzed within the context of capitalism. Thus, Romero employs a double analytical strategy: On the one hand, she aims to explore the structure of paid housework and on the other hand, she tries to identify the social relationships surrounding domestic service by analyzing the labour process. Romero shows how the daily practices of domestic service reproduce gender, class and race

[27] Ibid., p. 15.

domination. She explores personalism in the employer-employee relationship and the performance of rituals of deference manifested in spatial difference, in eating arrangements, in gift giving and obligation, and in practices such as the treatment of workers by employers as a "nonperson" or as "a family member" and the emotional demands forced upon domestics.

Romero is critical of previous work on domestic service on the grounds that these works analyzed domestic service in a social psychological framework concentrating on interpersonal relationships between domestic workers of color and white female employers. These approaches analyzed domestic workers' struggles as strategies to maintain dignity and self-esteem. She argues that the relationship would be better "conceptualized as an employee-employer relationship and as an instance of class struggle". Thus, the relationship should be treated like other employee-employer relationships under capitalism, in which the control over the work process is an arena of contest between workers and employees. For Romero conflicts between domestic workers and employers should not be restricted in the struggle for dignity on the part of employees because tensions arise from worker's issues as wages, work load, work pace, salary increases, breaks and benefits. In the case of Chicana domestic servants, their attempts are focused on restructuring the occupation to resemble a businesslike arrangement. Thus, they try to define the work on the basis of a contract, that is, to treat it as work per house or flat rather than as hourly work. Their strategies to gain control over the work process include job flexibility which allows workers to work for several employers and arrange the workweek to fit their personal needs; increasing pay and benefits; minimizing contact with employers and, finally, defining themselves as professional housekeepers. Under this understanding the work structure rather than the relationships with employers remain the main focus of struggle.

Judith Hellman's book on *Mexican Lives* concentrates on the experiences of sixty men and women and seeks to trace the impact of economic and political structures in the shaping of the lives of these people in the early 1990s. Her sample consists of sixty in-depth and wide ranging interviews with people who were "poor, middle-class, and rich, both rural and urban".[28] It contains fifteen profiles two of which are of domestic servants. Hellman uses her material with a high degree of sensitivity that manages to convey the artful way in which people make their lives in even the most constraining of circumstances. We can grasp the personal projects, plots and programs people devise in order to face an uncertain future in the context of the particular political and economic circumstances of Mexico since 1982.

Phyllis Palmer's book is structured around the question of middle-class identity in the

[28] Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexican Lives*, New York, 1994, p. 11.

United States in the period 1920-1945[29]. *Domesticity and Dirt* aims at exploring how middle-class women came to accept the role of the housewife during 1920-1945. In this context domestic servants provide an answer to the above question. Palmer argues that the ability to hire a servant enhanced the status of a woman and enabled her to accept confinement in her home. The division of labour in the household between the tasks performed by women employers and those performed by domestic servants was sustained by a dichotomic conceptualization between dirt and cleanliness, good and bad, angelic and slatternly, and serving and served, which enabled middle-class women to accept responsibility of the household and the role of the housewife.

Her interest in the topic is formulated by a rather self-reflective view, that is, why feminists in the 1980's continue to exploit "dark-skinned" females in order to advance their own economic well-being and social status. The opening of the book is an illustration of her personal engagement with the topic: "Housework is a persistent reality in my middle-class life". Palmer's aim is to explore the concrete historical processes through which women came to accept the low value assigned to housework. Furthermore, she asks how women learned their places as mistresses and servants and why some women pressed other women into service. The origins of this situation are traced to the 1920s. Palmer's evidence relies principally upon mainly advice books, novels, and movies. She examines the romantic images of housewifery depicted in advice books and novels in contrast to social and legal institutions which placed women's work and women workers in a low status position. The problem with these type of sources is that they cannot tell the extent to which middle-class women internalized the standards set by prescriptive literature and film. In addition, they cannot provide evidence of the tensions and conflicts which were generated when these ideas were transferred to and lived in the domestic space. Palmer also uses letters written by domestic workers to the members of the Roosevelt administration. This correspondence consists of letters written by live-in English-speaking domestic workers and convey information about the working conditions of domestic service. Palmer does not discuss the form of the correspondence in relation to the models and guidelines according to which these letters were structured. Nor does she discuss the purposes to which they responded. One of the important points of the book based upon the results of the 1930 census and studies conducted in Baltimore and Philadelphia, where the majority of domestic workers were black women, is that it challenges the dominant cultural image which depicted servants as single women, cut off

[29] Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States,*

from any form of attachments except those of the employer's family.

Palmer's analytical framework is informed by the interplay of class, gender, race, and sexuality. By considering these concepts as relational rather than of an absolute existence, the exploration of the relationship between employers and domestics is seen as crucial for the formation of the identity of white middle class women. Thus, one social group, in this case domestics, is understood as important for the identity of another group, middle-class women. Palmer argues that domestic service rather than being a stage in a woman's life represented sharp divisions in the status of different groups of women. For Palmer "divisions in status do not represent simply divisions of class and race. [...] Rather, inherent in the division of housework with its system of tasks, relationships, and the meanings assigned to them were notions of womanhood, of whiteness and non-whiteness, and of middle-classness as well as of working-classness. Through the social assignment of different jobs to different categories of women and through cultural significances attached to particular jobs performed by different groups of women, women learned their appropriate social identities in relation to those other women"[30]. Following this understanding, the book focuses on how white women learned to embody whiteness and they were shaped to fulfill a racially-based ideal of female identity. One of the problems of handling these questions is the type of sources upon the book relies. Novels, advice books and movies convey dominant ideas about the "ethos of middle-class housewifery" but what remains unanswered is the process through which middle-class identity was formed and articulated through the relationship between the mistress and the maid. Yet, Palmer makes an important contribution when she discusses mixed-class organizations and the struggle between social reformers, middle-class women and domestic workers for the conditions and regulations of domestic labour. She traces the process through which domestic service remained outside the protection of the law due to the unwillingness and inability of social reformers to push for domestic workers' rights and the efforts of middle class women to undermine any attempt for regulation and to reinforce the divisions of housework and the production of a domestic work force that would serve their interests. Finally, domestic workers who formed associations, wrote to public officials, spoke out at meetings and lobbied legislators failed to gain endorsement of their rights.

The link between concepts of moral and sexual purity with the housewife's work has been the core of Palmer's theoretical analysis. By using Freud and object-relations theory, Palmer traces the emergence of the Western unconscious in which images of good and bad

---

1920-1945, Philadelphia, 1989.

women were linked with feelings about mothers and infant bodies and selves. What femini psychoanalytic theory has offered, according to Palmer, is the importance of the mother in th infant's life and in the development of boys and girls into adults and the recognition tha infantile physical feelings about the body, dirt, sex and punishment pervade feelings abou independence and caring. The ambivalence of feelings towards the mother is resolved in different way for boys and girls. In Western culture, Palmer argues, dominant men spli feelings about good and bad women and project them onto different groups of women. At th same time, women, by experiencing feelings of good and bad within themselves, projecte upon lower-class women and women of colour images of sexuality and moral inferiority whil they undertook the role of missionaries for social purity. Furthermore, the labour of working class women enabled them to appear dainty and clean and to detach themselves from images o dirt and dangerous sexuality.

[30] Ibid., p. 13-14.

Chapter Two
Methodology

I. The Sample

The data for this study is compiled of twenty interviews[1] with women who worked as domestic servants. The importance of the family and geographical backgrounds rather than the function of the labour market and the location of the experience of domestic service in different geographical areas shifted my focus from comparing the experience and the situation of domestic service between different Greek cities into restricting my study mainly to the area of Athens. As this thesis is concerned with the role of domestic service in the production of subjectivities, it is more appropriate for this approach to compare the backgrounds of rural migrants and first or second generation refugees from Asia Minor and to trace the respective life-paths of the participants in order to delineate the similarities and differences as well as the variety of their experience of domestic service. More concretely, this comparison will highlight the impact of the domestic servant's background, that is, the structure of family and local economy, on domestic labour and life-paths as well as on the cultural meanings of domestic service as opposed to factory work.

The sample is divided in two case studies. The interviewees who migrated from rural areas to Athens form the first case study. Within this sample there is a subdivision: six of the interviewees originated from the island of Folegandros and I handle them autonomously because for them domestic service was a form of temporary rural to urban migration with the purpose of securing a dowry. These six interviewees were born between 1906 and 1921 and after a long period in domestic service (10 years on average) they returned to Folegandros after they amassed a dowry. Two of the Folegandrians come from Ano Meria and three from the capital city, Chora. Another five interviewees came from different rural areas of Greece (born between 1910 and 1925). They migrated to the capital and four of them stayed in Athens, while one returned to the village from which she originated. One of these five interviewees stayed in service all her life. Furthermore, one interviewee worked as a servant in a city of continental Greece, Lamia, and came to Athens after her marriage. Domestic service was a form of migration for these eleven women. These two patterns of migration, rural-to-urban-to rural and rural-to-urban, can be better understood by exploring the family backgrounds and types of

[1] I did nine more interviews, including four with refugees and Folegandrians, two with middle-class women who employed servants, and one with a district nurse, which I use as background information.

households of the interviewees and the ways in which domestic service as a family strateg functioned in rural communities.

First and second-generation refugees form my second case study. These te interviewees (born between 1916 and 1932) belong to the urban population as they were eithe born, or spent their childhood in Athens and, thus, were integrated into the urban community However, their upbringing and living in the refugee neighbourhoods provided a strong feelin; of belonging to the a refugee community.

Their lives in service were much shorter and I shall argue that for refugees domesti service was mainly a form of child labour as they later moved to factory work. Most of then were sent to work into domestic service as children either through the intervention of stat institutions in periods of war (1922 and 1941-45) or by their families as a strategy for surviva in situations of extreme deprivation. Their backgrounds and the location of their stories in the context of the historical circumstances of the inter-war period helps to highlight the ways ir which gender and class was constructed within diverse socio-cultural contexts. My aim is tc stress the similarities as well as the differences between these two case studies. Moreover, the thesis aims to illustrate the variety of experiences in domestic service within the case studies.

Finally, I interviewed two women (rural migrants, one from Ano Meria of Folegandros and the other from a village close to Arta in Ipeiros) who went to service in Athens after the Second World War in order to compare their experience in service with those who were working before or during the war.

II. The Research Process

Contact was mainly established with the interviewees through friends, with the exception of one who was located through the public asylum for elderly people. Ioannis Kouvas, a writer and teacher of gymnastics, and also responsible for the choir in the senior citizen's center (KAPI), introduced me to the center of Kaisariani where I did several interviews, though for this research I use two with second-generation refugees which meet the criteria of my project. It turned out that informal networks were the most effective for gaining access to people who had formerly worked as servants because it was crucial to be introduced to the potential interviewees by a person whom they trusted and knew very well. Due to the status that domestic service holds in Greek society, it was not surprising that advertisements on local newspapers proved unsuccessful.

Several of these informal networks provided access to potential interviewees. Friends introduced me to relatives who had previously been domestic servants. They either came with

me to the first interview or gave me the phone numbers after they had talked to them about my project and they had agreed to be interviewed. In this way, the majority of the women I interviewed knew about my project and the purpose of the interviews. Yet, a snowball sample was never achieved because most of the interviewees were reluctant to identify other women, friends or relatives, who had been servants.

Margarita Papadopoulou, the aunt of a friend who was in service in the 1960s and lives in Ano Meria of Folegandros introduced me to two women. She was present at both interviews and took a very active role in the process of the interview. Her husband and relatives, who had mothers and sisters in service, provided me with important information about the family economy and the conditions of migration. I was referred to four women from the Chora of Folegandros by a Folegandrian who lives in Athens. However, one of the potential interviewees refused to talk and the other denied that she had been a servant.

The mother of a classmate at the university, Evaggelia Matthaiou, provided an entry into the refugee community of Kaisariani. She contacted some women who were old friends and relatives and she accompanied me to the interviewees' houses. I interviewed these two women twice, once with Evaggelia and once alone. They were sisters, so I had the opportunity to cross-check the information concerning their family origins, father's employment, housing conditions. Evaggelia's presence was extremely helpful for the establishment of a feeling of trust and confidence towards me. Evaggelia accepted to be interviewed after having being present at two interviews and she had followed the process of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in the women's homes with the exception of those conducted in the centre for elderly people and in the public asylum for elderly people. In the cases in which family members or a person who had introduced me to an individual were present during the interview, I tried to do a second interview with them alone. In the case of two Folegandrians, it seemed impossible to conduct the interview with the women alone. Husbands or daughters were present and exercised control over the interviewees. These women were especially cautious of giving information about domestic service or to narrate their lives.

III. Oral History: The Use of the Other's Voice

The interest in domestic service as a topic of research is closely connected to the feminist concern of reclaiming "lost" histories. The emergence of new subjects, such as the subject of gender and the subject of class and race oppression, have to be seen in close connection to questions of disciplinary formation. In this use of the past as a source of meaning and identity the category of experience played a significant role. Experience was the *basis* of feminism, as

Teresa de Lauretis pointed out, as sharing and voicing women's experiences produced new interpretative frameworks and established a community and an identity.

Oral history has been considered as the proper method for hearing the "voice" of the subject of oppression. It has been used as a technique for recovering the past in its "purity". Ann McClintock argues that oral history has been considered "a technology of reproducing political memory, a technology accessible for the first time to the silenced, the inaudible, and the disenfranchised".[2] It has been linked to the feminist emancipatory project and its shift towards a conception of communal identity which emphasizes the aspects of women's experiences that bind women together. The category of experience has been used to ground claims of a distinctive identity and a truthful expression of the self, while oral history has been considered as a technique for recovering the representative aspects of women's experience. As Joan Scott points out, "making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logic". A politics that is grounded on a pre-existing experience of women takes the existence of individuals for granted, masks the traces of domination and conflates the attributed, the imposed and the lived.[3] Thus rather than treating the experience of subjects as uncontestable evidence, my aim is to understand how subjects are constructed through experience, how they are constituted as different and how conceptions of the self are produced. Experience will not be treated as a foundation of knowledge about the past but as a means to understanding the process of identity formation.

The claim for objectivity in historical discipline required the disappearance of the historian as an author. The more hidden he was in the reconstruction of history, the more objective and universal his analysis was. Michel de Certeau argues that "the authority of the subject of knowledge [is established] by the elimination of everything concerning the speaker".[4] Oral history promises a more democratic history; not only at the level of opening new areas of social life and new subjects to public history, but also at the level of analyzing the impact of subject-to-subject relationships and problematizing the role of the investigator. The historian is pulled into the narrative, is implicated in a dialogue with the narrator and becomes part of the story.[5] Yet, as Gayatri Spivak pointed out, "the theoretical problems only relate to

---

[2] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 310.

[3] Denise Riley, *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History*, London, Macmillan, 1988, p. 100.

[4] Michel de Certeau, "History, Science, Fiction", *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Minneapolis, , University of Minneapolis Press, (trans. Brian Massumi) 1995, p. 218

[5] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, New York, 1991, p. 49; Luisa Passerini, "Memoria, autobiografia, oralità: il problema della

the person who knows. The person who *knows* has all the problems of selfhood. The person who is *known* somehow seems not to have a problematic self".[6]

Considering that the interview is, to a certain extent, a meeting of two (and sometimes of more than two) subjectivities, I would like to discuss the questions that arise from the involvement of unequal subjectivities. My aim is to discuss not only my positionality as an investigator but to deal with the reactions to my project, the absences, the refusal to talk, the tropes employed, such as irony, as well as "the operations of the complex and changing discursive processes by which identities are ascribed, resisted, or embraced".[7] To stress and include the discomfort of interviewees and the tensions that arise from the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is a way to point out the uneven relations of power and to see oral history as "a contested technology for historical power".[8] These tensions are not exhausted in the interpersonal relationship between interviewer and interviewee as they rest on specific historical circumstances and narratives, and thus they have to be historicized and contextualized.

IV. The Interview Is a Difficult Relationship: Collaboration and Conflict

There were several interviews in which the person who introduced me (usually an interviewee herself) to an interviewee was present in the interview. This presence not only provided the interviewees with a clearer idea of the process of the interview and the topics I was interested in, but it was also important for creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Furthermore, it helped me enormously to understand the social circumstances of their past and present lives. In the case of the two Folegandrians from Ano Meria, Margarita Papadopoulou acted as a mediator for finding interviewees and participated in both interviews. I was surprised when she explained that there was no talk among the women in Ano Meria about their long working lives in Athens. Whether this was a general phenomenon or not, there is evidence that there was silence within the community about this part of their lives after marriage. Margarita Papadopoulou wanted to listen and compare her experience in service after the Second World War with that of women in service before the War. She asked questions and had a very active role during the interview while she provided very important information about the local and

---

presentazione delle interviste dal punto di vista storiografico", *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, Anno XXXI, no. 3 (July-September 1990), p. 411.

[6] Quoted in Sara Suleri, "Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition" in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, p. 123.

[7] Scott, "The Evidence of Experience", p. 792.

family economy and the complex link between the tenurial system, labour relationships and marriage. She had an anthropological perspective on her community from which I benefited enormously.

Evaggelia Matthaiou not only introduced me to two interviewees, but she also took part in the interviews before deciding to have an interview with me. During the first interview there were many instances in which Evaggelia and Aggelina completely ignored me and a dialogue between them developed which was illuminating for understanding generation conflicts and the mother-daughter relationship, a relationship structural for their understanding of their lives. In these interviewees' narratives the self is presented as *identity through relation.*[9] Their stories were told through their mothers' lives and intermingled with and echoed the lives of family members. Their relationship with both the older and the younger generation was full of conflicts. It appeared that their was no place for identification, that there was no place in which they could fit in. Thus, rather than identity through relation, the presentation of the self took the form of *identity in difference or conflict.* They distanced themselves from their mothers' lives, as their lives were a struggle to do things in a different way than their mothers had done. And, at the same time, there was a woman in front of them whose life represents (in the imaginary as well as in reality) the lack in their own lives as young women: "About my life as a young woman like you are, I didn't live my times at all" [Evaggelia]. The following dialogue between Aggelina and Evaggelia is illuminating in locating the self *in difference* by the younger and the older generation:

> -Did you think to look for a job in another factory?
> *Aggelina.* If only I could be away from my mother and I didn't care where that would be.
> *Evaggelia.* They were backward women; they wanted to plague us...
> *Aggelina.* I had five children and I was still afraid of her. Five children and I was still afraid of her. To sit next to my husband, it was out of the question. She would kill me.
> *Evaggelia.* No way to do such things, now they kiss and stuff...
> *Aggelina.* Now girls have a life, I admire them...
> *Evaggelia.* We were living behind our times.
> *Aggelina.* I admire them.
> *Evaggelia.* So do I.
> *Aggelina.* It was better for you. For us it was worse...
> *Evaggelia.* Still, I had a mother-in-law who was a plague...only God could help you. And I had my mother, she brought the laundry from the houses she worked in and I was coming back from the factory and I

[8] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 310.

[9] Mary Mason, "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers", in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 210.

had to wash them and if I dared to say something: "You whore, you bitch...I do it for you, to feed you". Their lives were tyranny, and our lives a tyranny too. They were uneducated...
Aggelina. Yes, uneducated...

Generational tension will be dealt here in relation to the interview process and to issues of narrative authority and power. The theatrical setting of the above dialogue and my positioning as the audience show that there was a closed community of sentiment and understanding, which involved experiences that lay outside my understanding. Generational tension was one of the modes of pointing out my inability to understand certain experiences of theirs, of pointing out the *difference* between them and me. They referred to the difference of the lives of younger women both with satisfaction for the improvement and freedom that younger women enjoy and with contempt for the promiscuity and the luxury in which they live. The age, class and educational difference between them and me intermingled with the generational difference, which was often used to conceal tensions of status difference. An interviewee from Folegandros described the carnival celebrations in the island: "Youth is far away, beauty is far away, they cannot come back. If only youth were twice, but it was none. You know, those times girls did not enjoy like nowadays. But, please, tell me, is it a fashion to show your belly button [I didn't]? Nakedness..." Another Folegandrian said:

> We talk about love, not onions. Love. The looked at you and they desired you. Now, my girl, this evil situation makes me wonder. And I say, that's it; there is no respect. Is it possible, that you, you, not to mention names, desire a man and you take him to your house, in front of your mother and father and sleep in bed? [Eva].

> Now you all live well and you study and all, but those times, very few studied and there weren't so many goods. [Evaggelia]

Stressing generational difference was a way to break a fixed relationship during the interview in which I was the one who asked questions and they the ones who answered and provided me information. Shifting constantly the pronouns (you/young women) and putting me in the category of a young woman - as a position different to their own - was a way to engage me actively in the interview and at the same to create distance between the conditions and the understanding of my life and theirs. It was their strategy to avoid complicity as well as to stress the limits of a community of sentiment and of a sharing understanding of their lives.

The tactic of including and excluding me in the dialogue was performed also when I mentioned matters that involved impossible possessions or savings in relation to their financial situation. One unfortunate question was to interrupt Aggelina's narrative and ask whether she

saved money in order to raise a dowry. In a scornful way she answered with a questio "Dowry?" and then continued her narrative ignoring me: "Well, afterwards, Evaggelia... Challenges to my authority as an interviewer occurred with the Folegandrian women too. I wi refer more extensively to this issue when I deal with questions of identity, yet, the dialogu between Margarita and Anastasia illustrates the efforts to undermine educational/statu differences under the guise of generational difference. Again, my identification with th teacher establishes a distinction between "me" and "them":

> *Anastasia.* What can I tell you? Ask me, because I am absent-minded.
> *Margarita.* These serious manners are out of date, Kira Anastasia. Now, we shouldn't talk to children like that [using the polite form].
> *Anastasia.* And how shall we talk?
> *Margarita. Esi* [the second person singular in Greek is the informal grammatical type].
> *Anastasia.* It's not right. It is the first time I meet this young woman.
> *Margarita.* I don't like these things, Kira Anastasia.
> *Anastasia.* O.k. *Esi*, then.
> *Margarita.* She is an educated woman.
> *Anastasia.* I know that she is educated. She is not like me. That's an additional reason to talk to her politely.
> *Margarita.* Me, talk to teachers in the polite form? Never.

At the beginning of the second visit to Anastasia's house, Margarita skillfully displaced the authority of the interviewer. She positioned me as a child to whom one cannot talk in the formal manner. On the other hand, she did not want to be impolite so she presented it as fashionable to use the informal pronoun and as out of date to use the formal one. Then she used the example of the teacher as a way to talk indirectly and ironically about me: she would never recognize the authority of a teacher. Anastasia's reaction and insistence to talk to me in the formal manner justified by the acknowledgement of educational difference indicates that education constitutes a form of authority. Generational difference became a position of inferiority to counterbalance educational difference understood as a form of authority. Hidden in this tension was the challenge of any claim from my part of knowledge about her community and experience of domestic service. This is a knowledge that only Margarita is entitled to possess.

As shown above, the process of the interview was transformed and influenced by the interviewees. In addition, they set very clear boundaries about the questions they were eager to answer and which parts of the interview they did not want to be transcribed. Their

interventions and their presence made the interview a more collective and shared experience than I had planned and imagined. As Nora Skouteri-Didaskalou noted at a workshop on Oral History in Athens (January 1999), those who use oral history they can never see the world with the same eyes as they did before the experience of the interview. In the process of the interview, the experience of learning to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historical muted subject was a systematic unlearning of female privilege.[10]

Paradoxes of Oral History: Confession and Empathy

Having a second interview with several interviewees made the workings and paradoxes of oral history more visible. Although the mode of the narrative of their life-story had not changed, important information was added which illuminated and clarified issues which were raised in the first interview. An atmosphere of intimacy was established between us, which facilitated the exchange. Once the sense of trust had been created, women talked about their present anxieties and problems with their children and husbands. Sometimes the interview was a space where women could talk about issues which were difficult or impossible to talk about with their friends or their family. Some of them said that they felt relieved after the interview. The timing of the interview in relation to the circumstances in which women lived at the period of the interview was very important. One of the interviewees had just moved out living for fifty years in the same house. She was upset and she could not express her sadness to her children because she did not want to displease them. Her experience in the new house reinforced her memories of the neighbourhood and her youth. The interview was also a space to express her anxiety and sadness. Old age and the loneliness endured by women who did not have a social network, friends, husbands, children or relatives made them very open to talk from the first phone call. In circumstances of illness, women refused to be interviewed and did not want to be disturbed again. The confessional mode of talking made me aware of the contradictions of doing oral history. Although control over the interview was exercised through deciding about which experiences should or should not be transcribed, oral history seeks to break the boundaries between private and public.

The confessional mode of oral history is related to questions of power in the production of scholarly work. Michel Foucault has dealt with the return of these "Christian phantoms"[11] and traced some of the characteristics of scientific discourse in confession as well

---

[10] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Gary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, London, Macmillan 1988, p. 295.

[11] Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 37.

as analyzed the ways in which control is established through the use of techniques of confession. His analysis of the use of rituals of confession in scientific discourse as a means of establishing the subject at the centre of science and as the source of truth is all the more relevant to the workings of oral history. As Foucault argues, since the Middle Ages Western societies have introduced confession as one of the "rituals we rely on for the production of truth".[12] Foucault has argued that the rituals of confession have functioned within the norms of scientific regularity. Confession has extended from a religious technique to a general mode of producing the truth about oneself in everyday life. It has lost its ritualistic and exclusive localization and it has been employed in a whole series of relationships. The discourse of science has constituted a science of the subject in which lived experience serves as evidence. Confession, as a ritual of discourse, operates within power relationships, as the confession is required by an authority who prescribes and appreciates it, while the agency of domination resides not in the one who speaks but in the one who listens and asks questions. The veracity of confession is guaranteed by the bond, the basic intimacy in discourse, between the one who speaks and what he is speaking about.[13]

The nineteenth century, as Foucault argued, led to the procedures of confession to operate within the regular formation of a scientific discourse. Through the method of interpretation, the truth did not reside in the subject who confessed but was constituted and completed through recording it and through its decipherment. The production of truth had to pass through the relationship between the person who confessed and through the validation of confession from one who not only listened and decided about the procedure of confession but also deciphered and interpreted it.[14]

Oral history has used the techniques of confession as they are outlined by Foucault in order to reclaim the experiences of subjects of oppression and to guarantee the truthfulness of the depiction of the life and the inner feelings of those subjects. Feminist scholarship has used this method to recover representative aspects of women's experience and has created a genre of literature that seeks to disclose the most intimate and often traumatic details of women's lives. Empathy, as Doris Sommer argues, might be "a good feeling that covers over a controlling disposition, what Derrida calls 'an inquisitorial insistence, an order, a petition... To demand

[12] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley Vintage Books, New York, 1980, p. 58.
[13] Ibid., pp. 62-5.
[14] Ibid., pp. 66-7.

the narrative of the other, to extort it from him like a secretless secret'"[15] However, empathy can be an ethical feeling, when it is defined and practiced against easy appropriations. "Empathy is more a mutual struggle than an achieved attitude. It requires a capacity for detachment, a recognition of difference, distrust of one's powers, trust of another intentions, and a willingness to revise and reconsider what one 'knows'".[16] Dominick LaCapra has also argued that the historian's response to traumatic events must involve "empathic unsettlement".[17]

I have referred both to the conflicts that arose during the interview in the meeting of unequal subjectivities and the distancing strategies and tropes of the interviewees to avoid complicity, and to their active participation in the process of the interview. In the next chapter, in which I will deal with those who refused to talk and denied that they had been servants, it will become apparent that the desire to learn the other can be asymmetrical and resisted. Moreover, the resistance of these interviewees will be seen as both an expression of shame as well as calculated refusals. Not to erase the questions that have structured the interview is one way for the reader to experience the involvement of two unequal subjectivities. However, the question of emotions and the power of interpretation reside at the center of the politics of confession.

Emotions

Dealing with a topic that is so emotionally charged raises ethical questions. Here the distinction between emotional discourse and emotions as discourse is necessary.[18] Arlette Farge has also talked about the problems of a topic that earns the label of *miserabilisme*.[19] The seductive power of the narration and the relationship with the interviewee arouses emotion. But emotion does not mean sentimentality. Rather than excluding it as incompatible with historical discourse, it is necessary to make space for it in order to understand the "mediocrity and extraordinariness of situations" and to encounter the unfamiliar and the already known". Yet, it

---

[15] Doris Sommer, "Sacred Secrets: A Strategy for Survival", *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, p. 198.
[16] Jane Flax, "Taking Multiplicity Seriously", *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, vol. 32, no. 4, 1996, p. 588.
[17] Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss", *Critical Inquiry*, no. 25, Summer 1999, pp. 699.
[18] Lila Abu Lughod and Catherine Lutz (eds), *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 12.
[19] Arlette Farge, *Fragile Lives: Violence, Power and Solidarity in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (trans. Carol Shelton), 1993, p. 3-4.

is necessary to understand the "topography of the self"[20] - the cultural and historical circumstances in which the self is embedded - which underlies the expression of emotions in order to avoid a restrictive understanding of oral history as a relationship between two subjectivities, that of the interviewee and of the interviewer. Generational memory and the forms and use of storytelling in the refugee community illustrate that life-story narration is grounded in collective memory and practices and thus are not just products of the interview. As Luisa Passerini has pointed out:

> The field of women's discourse -a field endowed with cultural and symbolic autonomy - is revealed in the history of cultural transformations side-by-side with social ones. The arguments which reduce oral sources to the spontaneous and contingent product of the encounter between interviewee and interviewer cannot encompass this double reality. According to them, the self-representations of irreverent behaviour and stories of revolts and independence would be nothing but the outcome of an occasional interaction between two people under the influence of feminist ideology. [...t]he testimonies bring into the open already existing areas of female social life, involving the passing on of experiences and stories from mother to daughter, grandmother to grandchild, and between neighbours, friends and relations. [...] The most illuminating research is able to identify the patterns in the contradictions between stereotypes found in the oral sources, and the information which emerges through in-depth interviews and participant observation.[21]

The highly emotional discourse of the refugees, which revolves around suffering, has to be connected with stories produced in the community and which take the form of "speaking bitterness". Central emotional terms translated as "hunger" and "poverty"[22] have a history in the refugee community that serve to reinforce collective identity and make possible the incorporation of shameful experiences into a pre-existing narrative form produced to express suffering.

Furthermore, and this leads me to emotional discourse, there are the emotions and the tears that cannot be made visible in the transcribed text and the satisfaction and the power of the interviewees to move you. There was a woman who in front of all her family said to me: "Has anybody else moved you to tears?" These discourses of affect or passions make visible

---

[20] Arjun Appadurai, "Topographies of the Self: Praise and Emotion in Hindu India", in *Language and the Politics of Emotions*, pp. 92-111.

[21] Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of The Turin Working Class* (trans. Robert Lumley, Jude Bloomfield), New York, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 31.

[22] Jane Fajans, "The Person in Social Context: The Social Character of Baining Psychology", in G. White and J. Kirkpatrick (eds), *Person, Self, and Experience: Exploring Pacific Ethnopsychologies*. Berkeley, University of California Press 1985, p. 367-97.

the economics of construction of historical discourse and challenge notions of objectivity and the secure positions of both the subject and object of knowledge, both in relation to each other, as well as in relation to the past.

The Power of Interpretation

Many critics have pointed out that the power of interpretation resides in the investigator and in this way the subject of discourse becomes a textualized object, subjected to the researcher's own interests and uses.[23] Social anthropology has often resorted to an ethnographic romanticism, which presents the subject as a survivor of a deteriorating culture while social historians have used the speaker as an illustration of an occupational type and have celebrated a culture of poverty. In this way the subject "simultaneously privileged and dismissed" is reduced to an object, to the raw material of historical enterprise.

The narratives of the interviewees and the theoretical framework of their interpretation cannot be considered as two separate processes, nor can their relationship be viewed as an one-way process in which the model dominates the narratives. Rather the testimonies introduce differences and alternations in the framework. The interpretation is a relationship between the analytic framework and its alternation by an otherness.[24] This dialectic involves a different experience both of time and of the subject-object relationship. In the historiography that was born with the Enlightenment, the separation between the subject of knowledge and its object defined the separation between past and present. As de Certeau argued, the "past" became something exterior, something to be conquered, while the documents of the "past" were connected to a productive apparatus (historiography) and thus treated like the raw material or the client of a business.[25] With oral history both the place and time of narrative undermine the differentiation between past and present and subject-object and force the researcher to take into account the plurality of subjects involved as well as the different temporalities embedded into the narrative. The space of the interview makes it impossible to "hide behind the picture of the past the present that produces and organizes it".[26] Furthermore, the analysis of the process of the making of subjectivity through the use of testimonies introduces time, because it is through memory and from the vantage point of the present that this reconstruction takes place both from the part of the researcher as well as of the subject of the testimony. The life-story

---

[23] Anne E. Goldman, "Is That What She Said?", *Cultural Critique*, no. 25, Fall 1983, p. 180.
[24] Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, p. 21.
[25] Ibid., p. 216.
[26] Ibid., p. 203.

interview is an invitation for self-reflection; and "if self-reflection is the goal, then interpretation is the means to achieve it".[27] Thus, the testimony is already in itself an interpretation that informs and to a large extent dominates the scholar's interpretation.

Finally, consistent with the omnipotence of the scholar based on his elimination or irrelevance as a foundation of truth is the erasure of ambiguity from historical narrative and the concealment of the process of selection of the material. Instead, we need to acknowledge the impossibility of fitting every experience into the narrative and of restoring referentiality to the structures, and to point out the inconsistencies and contradictions within the process of historical production.

> Sometimes we confront experiences that simply are; we cannot make sense of them, fit them into a believable story line, or understand their causes. They cannot be incorporated into or contained within livable meaning systems. [...] To tolerate the absence of meaning, the limits of narrative organization, and the ineradicable persistence of unintelligibility.[28]

V. Introducing the Topic

Acknowledging that it is "in the narrativization of the story that identity arises"[29], the use of life-history and the mode of semi-structured interview was the appropriate method for enabling the unfolding of subjectivity. Life-history permits the free movement between different identities, such as family, community and work identity. Moving back and forth between the memory of domestic service and the periods before and after it allows us to trace beginnings and turning points, the variety of work identities as well as the symbolic, real and metaphoric aspects of figures.[30] Yet, the preciseness of my topic and my interest in stressing a particular form of work identity and in extracting concrete information about domestic service unavoidably structured the interview to a large extent. The responses of interviewees and their memories varied according to the social circumstances in which they lived, the bodily changes that had occurred at the period of their lives in which I did the interview, the cultural perceptions of domestic labour of the community and the prescriptions of the storytelling

---

[27] Paul Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, edited by Lewis S. Mudge, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1980, p. 43.

[28] Flax, "Taking Multiplicity Seriously", p. 589.

[29] Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" in S. Hall and Paul du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London, Sage Publications, 1996, p. 4.

[30] For the use of this technique in an oral history project that was accompanied by the establishment of the archive *Centro di Documentazione delle Donne* in Bologna see, Luisa Passerini, "A Memory for Women's History: Problems of Method and Interpretation, *Social Science History*, vol. 16, no. 4, Winter 1992, pp. 669-692.

within the community. The range of responses extended from refusal to eagerness and ambiguity.

Introducing my topic to the interviewees was not an easy enterprise. The idea was to describe my project as an exploration of the life-stories of women who had been domestic workers. In the cases in which the interviewees were already informed by a third party and had agreed to be interviewed, this did not pose a problem. The iron refusal of some women to be interviewed and their denial of having worked as servants made me cautious in contact with these individuals. Thus, in the cases in which I was not sure if a potential interviewee had worked as a domestic servant I was afraid that by identifying her immediately as such she would deny to be interviewed. The stigma attached to domestic service in Athens made me aware of the vocabulary I would use. The only way around the problem was to ask if they had ever worked in a house. I realized that I was part of the culture that viewed domestic service as a stigmatized occupation. My positionality as investigator had to undergo changes and it was constantly challenged.

The construction of domestic service as a topic creates a subject of investigation and invests her with an identity. It presupposes a strong work identity and, as with every kind of identity, it presupposes a positive public image. These positive elements are absent in Greece and account for the difficulties of doing oral history. Moreover, it obscures the fact that a variety of work identities can exist for an individual. Past experience is not kept into a pristine place ready to be re-discovered through the appropriate questions.[31]

Cultural forms of collective memory and the forms of story telling of particular communities have a strong effect on the construction of life-history. In the refugees' case the sense of belonging in a distinct community within the urban setting not only influenced life narration, but also created confusion and puzzlement about my project. In my first encounter with a second generation refugee couple of whom the wife had been a domestic servant, it was difficult to explain that my project was not about the memories of men and women in Asia Minor and that I wasn't writing the history of the Greek population in Asia Minor. The refugee (Asia Minor) identity was especially strong as the majority of first and second generation refugees still lead their lives in the old refugee neighbourhoods where the collective memory of Asia Minor is formulated in monuments, festivals, talks, choirs, and in the memories of childhoods of deprivation and of solidarity which are connected with the expatriation of their parents from Asia Minor.

Gender and class played an important role in perceptions about the right to narrate a life-story. A gendered understanding of the entitlement of knowledge and narration of personal or family events that touched on broader political issues permeated the interviewees and their family members. In the case of refugees, men were considered more eligible to tell their life-stories because these stories were intertwined with major political events and the epic of surviving after their expulsion of Asia Minor. Husbands tried to overstep my interest in interviewing their wives claiming, explicitly or implicitly, that they were more capable of narrating the experience of living in a refugee community in Athens and of transmitting the memories of their parents of the Asia Minor catastrophe. My insistence on interviewing women who had been domestic servants was confronted with some discomfort and dissatisfaction from the part of husbands and they slowly withdrew.

Domestic service as an occupational category holds a very low status which affects the ideas about the capability of a person who has been a servant to talk about it. The self-awareness that the narration of life-history requires is considered a form of cultural capital that is class and gender specific. A son-in-law claimed that he knows more about the experience of domestic service than his mother-in-law who had been a servant. After the interview he complained to his daughter: "Was there anything more that your grandmother said than I would have said?" The status of an occupation attributes to a person certain capacities while excludes others even of the ability to think. The grandmother of a friend who was a primary school teacher claimed that the woman who worked all her life as a servant in her brother's house was not able to tell anything about her life otherwise she would not have been a servant.

[31] Jane Flax, "Multiples: On the Contemporary Politics of Subjectivity", *Human Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1–2, April 1993", p. 45.

Chapter Three

Shame in the Narratives of Domestic Servants

This chapter is an attempt to understand the silence of a high proportion of interviewees with regard to their experience in domestic service, as well as the lack of identification with or ambivalence towards the role of servant. I argue that what underlies their silence is shame produced through the construction of domestic service as a stigmatized identity both by dominant discourses and by notions of labour in the urban working-class community. In the second part of the paper, I will discuss the shame produced through the relationship between servants and employers, and encountering middle-class life. In the examination of the class politics that exist within the sphere of the house, shame appears as a structure of feeling that occurs through the revelation of one's own inappropriateness and lack.

Recent accounts of domestic service are closely connected to the concern with reclaiming "lost" histories, while the use of oral history has allowed memories and stories that have been excluded from official versions of history to be inserted into historical narrative. These "lost" histories are constructed by memories of subjects which had been consigned to the "dustbin of history," which Greil Marcus defines as a wasteland, as a territory without borders, and thus without any means to a narrative, a language with which to tell a story. As Marcus argues, "written history [...] creates its own refugees, displaced persons, men and women without a country, cast out of time, the living dead."[1] That those subjects were written out of history had implications for their public representation and the material now available to tell their stories. Because "one could write about them, but there was never the danger of their 'writing back.' Just as one could speak to them without fear of their 'talking back.' One could even observe them, hold them in prolonged gaze, without encountering the risk of being observed, viewed, or judged in return."[2] Moreover, the "monology" imposed by the exclusion of certain memories deprived those excluded of a language with which to narrate their story. Those who have been consigned to "history's dustbin," Marcus writes, "can barely credit even their own memories, people who are cut off from each other, and isolated even from their own selves, by the shame of stories they cannot tell and that no one would believe if they would."[3]

---

[1] Greil Marcus, *The Dustbin of History*, Picador, London, 1996, p. 17.

[2] Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature" in Terry Lovell (ed.), *Feminist Cultural Studies II*, p. 491.

[3] Marcus, *The Dustbin of History*, pp. 18–20.

Thus, to encounter the traumatic aspect of memories of those who have been ashamed to acknowledge their shame and of those who found a narrative that can incorporate experiences of shame, imposes a different perspective on the question of hierarchy and a new kind of history. It is an attempt to acquire discursive recognition for an experience that has not been acknowledged.

I. Conceptualizations of Shame

Theoretical approaches on shame have a long history in the fields of anthropology, psychology, and the sociology of emotions. Most accounts of shame in the fields of sociology and social psychology can be organised around three perspectives. Firstly, those studies that view emotions as biological processes linked to drives or instincts. Experiences of shame are assumed to be the outcome of universal psychological processes. Social factors are recognised as playing a role only in the stimulation or expression of emotions. The fixity of emotions in biology leads to a perception of emotions as universal processes. The most astute critiques of this approach come from those anthropological studies that point to the cultural and historical specificity of emotions. Arjun Appadurai seeks to outline the topographies of the self that underlie the expression of emotions and argues that the Western topography of the self which is based on the division between inner and outer states cannot apply to all cultures and historical periods.[4] In the same collection of essays, Lila Abu-Lughod and Catherine Lutz have proposed examining emotions as social practices. Rather than seeing emotions as substances carried by the vehicle of discourse, Lughod and Lutz invite us to view emotions in a double sense, as *emotional discourses* (discourses that have an affective content or effect), and as *discourses on emotion* (theories about emotion), and to investigate how emotional discourses are implicated in the play of power and operate in the system of social hierarchy.[5]

Secondly, there are the studies that have conceptualised shame as a social emotion which occurs in social interaction and appears in a context of a negative evaluation of the self either by oneself or others. These approaches view shame as a causal agent and seek to define its causes. Some of these approaches place the causes of shame in physical processes and others in social structure.[6] For Thomas Scheff the production of shame is located in

---

[4] Arjun Appadurai, "Topographies of the Self: Praise and Emotion in Hindu India", in *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, pp. 92–111.

[5] Lughod and Lutz (eds.), "Introduction", in *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, pp. 10 and 15.

[6] The first approach has been developed by S.S. Tomkins, the second by T. Kemper. For a comprehensive review of these approaches see Thomas Scheff, "Socialization of Emotions: Pride and Shame as Causal Agents", in Theodore

socialisation practices. He is interested in the elaboration of a typology of social contexts that produce shame and in the models of causal sequences within which shame appears.[7] The above approaches are based on interpersonal relations and their findings are grounded on experimental or observed interaction. As Pierre Bourdieu has pointed out in his criticism of social psychology and interactionism, "interpersonal relations are never individual-to-individual relationships and the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction."[8] Although Bourdieu does not write directly about emotions, his notion of "bodily hexis" as a set of embodied dispositions that bear the effects of power and reproduce social divisions suggests thinking of emotions as embodied.[9]

Finally, there are studies that explore the relationship between shame and identity. Erving Goffman has dealt with shame in his seminal work on stigma. Goffman's analysis rests on the premise that "society establishes the means of categorising persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of these categories."[10] The only description of the categorisation system is contained in the notion of a "normal human being" which, as Goffman states, derives from the law and bureaucratic institutions, which provide the basic imagery through which people conceive of themselves. Social identity, in the sense of the attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for an individual according to their age, gender, and social standing, is spoiled when an individual's attributes stray from those of their category. Although stigma refers to an attribute that is discrediting, it is in the realm of social relationships that stigma makes sense and acquires its meaning for identity. For Goffman the stigmatised individual holds the same beliefs about identity as "normal" individuals: "The standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failings, inevitably causing him, if only at moments, to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he ought to be."[11] Shame arises from "the individual's perception of one of his own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess, and one he can readily see himself as not possessing."[12]

Kemper (ed.), Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions, State University of N.Y. Press, Albany, 1990, pp. 281–302; also Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling rules, and Social Structure", *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 85, no. 3, 1979, pp. 551–575.

[7] An example of this approach is Thomas Scheff, "Socialization of Emotions", pp. 280–301.

[8] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge, 1977, p. 81.

[9] Lughod and Lutz (eds.), *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, p. 12.

[10] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1963, p. 2.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Although Goffman considers low-class status as a form of class stigma, which he includes in the typology of tribal stigma (of race, nation and religion), he deals exclusively with individual stigma and its management in face-to-face interactions. Yet, he recognises that to fully understand and analyze tribal stigma, it is necessary to put it in historical context and see it in reference to the political development.

Helen Merrel Lynd's account of shame is the most relevant and useful for the understanding of the silence and disidentification with domestic service as it recognises not only the importance and relevance of shame for the understanding of identity but it places shame in the social and historical context in which it arises. Pamela Fox has recently recognised the usefulness of Lynd's work to the cultural construction of class.[13] Lynd criticizes psychologists and social scientists for the lack of consideration of the time dimension, as well for taking for granted the present structure and functioning of society.

For Lynd, shame is an experience that affects and is affected by the whole self. "Experiences of shame are a painful uncovering of hitherto unrecognized aspects of one's personality as well as of unrecognized aspects of one's society and of the world."[14] The idea of exposure and uncovering of one's own self is important for locating shame in social space, as well as for the consideration of social relationships in its production.

Lynd's understanding and conceptualization of identity draws from the work of Adler and Erikson. The perception of the self as an unfinished project, as a lifetime achievement and not as a psychological given, is borrowed from Adler, while the interplay between the individual and the collective, the connection between the social and historical circumstances and the individual, and the importance of the life styles of one's own culture in the shaping of identity is drawn from Erikson's work on identity. Lynd is critical of the way in which analytical categories such as personality and self have become entities in psychology and social science.

Finally, Lynd points to the liberating effect of expressing and communicating shame, and to the awareness of one's own identity that self-revelation and the exposure of one's society entails: "Shame while touched off by a specific, often outwardly trivial, occurrence initially felt as revealing one's own inadequacies, may also confront one with unrecognized

---

[13] Pamela Fox, *Class Fictions: Shame and Resistance in the British Working-Class Novel, 1890–1945*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1994, pp. 12–20.

[14] Helen Merrel Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, New York, Harcourt, 1958, p. 183.

desires of one's own and the inadequacy of society in giving expression to these desires."[15]

II. The Effects of Representations of Domestic Servants on Subjectivity

"If identity", as Stuart Hall argues, "is about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming, then the question is not 'who we are' but *how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.*"[16] In the case of the interviewees, negative representations and positionings of domestic service in normative discourses as well as the negative cultural meanings of domestic service in the urban working-class community deny them the possibility of being part of a story, of belonging, of the suturing into an identity. This section is an attempt to investigate the effects of the negative positioning of domestic service on women's subjectivity, the impact of negative definitions on subjects.

The gender and class prejudice of members of the Resistance movement during the Second World War has rarely been raised. The prejudice towards domestic servants and the low value attached to this form of labour had repercussions on the trust and confidence in, and the value placed on, the people that performed this work.

For those from an urban community, especially the "red districts" like Kaisariani or Kokkinia, the meaning that domestic service acquired was linked to its low status in the working-class movement, which was reinforced during the Resistance. The close relationship between mistress and servant diminished the trustworthiness of servants to serve the Resistance.

K. K. was in the Labour Sector of the National Liberation Front (EAM). A comrade who had a corner shop in Kolonaki brought her into contact with a domestic servant. Identification between employer and servant was implicit in the risks entailed in approaching servants during the Resistance movement: "But it was dangerous to enter an alien house, the enemy's house. You don't enter the servant's house". In explaining her reluctance to approach servants, untrustworthiness is grounded in the lack of class consciousness (the implication is false consciousness) stemming somehow automatically from the nature of service employment, which recalls Marxist ideas in the working-class movement about the imitating subjectivity of domestic servants.

---

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

[16] Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", in S. Hall and Paul du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London, Sage Publications, 1996, p. 4 [emphasis mine].

> I participated in the Resistance for a period in 1943, during the Occupation, and I had contact with some servants in Kolonaki, but we never had meetings all together. Nor had we a house, nor could you tell them, "tomorrow we have a demonstration," to leave the house – she couldn't leave. The only thing that could be done was just make a contact. For example, the teacher could pay a visit to the family and say, "tell me news." Tell her news – what's going on – give her a brochure and get her to give me a subscription. We couldn't do more than that. Thus, we cannot say that they were [in the Resistance], we do not have a movement [agency]. We kept contact with these girls to inform them. And in the meantime, they talked to each other. But you couldn't *trust* them, because they did not have consciousness, because the emotions were unselfconscious. I remember in 1943, I was in the underground Resistance movement and I left my house and I go to a friend in Kolonaki and I tell him find me shelter. And he calls a servant and says "take her home." She lets me in through the kitchen door and we enter the small room. And there – I didn't know the house – the little one had a boyfriend, and with the liberty of a boyfriend he enters the little room and he sees me, and I was quick and I said, "I come from the province and I'm leaving, I couldn't find a ticket in the train." I told them, "I'm leaving now, I'm leaving and I'll come back, I'll come back in an hour." I never saw them again after that, I disappeared: how could I go back? The conditions were difficult for all working women before the war. [emphasis mine]

The lack of consciousness emanates in an automatic way from the structure of service employment. The evocation of the incident in 1943 serves to illustrate the belief in the lack of consciousness. The description's aim is to convey naivete and lack of responsibility. The woman is presented as a little girl, while the scene with the boyfriend diminishes her reliability even further, with an implicit reference to sexuality. The narrative dismisses completely the courage of this woman who agreed to provide shelter to a stranger, probably endangering at least her job during the Occupation, while it enhances the cleverness and the readiness of the narrator avoiding a trap.

Class distinction in the resistance movement can be illustrated from a narration of an interviewee who was a member in National Solidarity a left-wing relief organization of the National Liberation Front (EAM) during the Occupation. Ioanna was trained in the organization as a nurse.[17] Her work in the organization was an extension of her job in service as she looked after an elderly woman since she was seven years old.

[17] Tasoula Vervenioti argues that although women's participation in the resistance movement enlarged their participation in the public sphere, it was enouraged insofar it was needed and on the basis of their capacity for feminine tasks. Tasoula Vervenioti, *I ginaika tis antistasis* [The Woman of Resistance], Athens, Odysseas, 1994, pp.190-191.

> We were gathered and all the university was there. They were all female students. All the students smoked and offered me a cigarette. And their was an old lady and she said to me: "Comrade Ioanna, I will recommend you, my child, not to smoke. It will be against you. Don't look the other women, they are different, they are accustomed to being different. I can see that you are different". And since then I don't want the smoke.

Ideas about domestic service in the urban working-class community and its connection with sexual exploitation are reflected in Aggelina's interview. Aggelina's narrative starts by stating that her husband asked her to leave service because he couldn't accept seeing her so overwhelmed by work. He gives her an ultimatum: "You either leave the house or we separate." "I was forced to leave," she told me. The interview closes like a circle. Aggelina talks about the gender-biased perceptions of domestic service in the refugee community. In relation to the status that factory work held, she said:

> Of course, those who worked in the factories were more valued [than servants]. They used to call us *doules* (slaves). She is *doulara* [note the sexual overtones that the maximizing suffix attributes to the word], they said. When men chased them, they treated servants as second-class women, they didn't respect them. That's why my husband asked me to leave service [...] When I was engaged to my husband he took me to meet his aunt. "Is it Aggelina that you are going to marry?" [she already knew her] She was enthusiastic. She hugged me, she kissed me... And then she said: "Do love her, my son, she is a good girl, very industrious, and don't give anybody the right to call her *doulara.*" I still remember, now this woman is dead, what she said: "To give this right depends on you." Because to call you that was the worse insult. Yes it was.

Aggelina's interview shows the way in which the name of an occupation is designated to function as a stigma by expressing excessive sexuality, and has a classifying property. A property that does not indicate class membership but its exclusion from it.

I will not discuss here the sexual vulnerability of domestic servants in relation to the experiences of the interviewees. It was a common experience to abandon a post because of sexual harassment and suffer the sexual advances of employers, their sons, and relatives. Yet, the interviewees have internalised the perceptions that put the blame on women, even in cases where they themselves were the victims of sexual harassment. Panajiota, a rural migrant from a village in Peloponnese, stayed in domestic service for twenty years. Although she describes her experience as extreme torture due to her mistress's violent behaviour, she did not leave her post until the brother of her mistress attempted to rape her. As is the case with all the interviewees, she invested great importance in her moral integrity: "Thanks be to God, I didn't

do anything wrong to provoke anyone to lay a finger on me. I was honest and honourable. Because, when the other sees that you are a good person, he does not approach. It's true. If you don't do something to provoke the man, he does not approach."

Sexual harassment was construed as a shameful experience which made women perceive it as their own failing and made them feel that they fell short of what they ought to be. Athina's words encapsulate the unequal gender-distribution of blame and shame: "It is the girl they despise. The man puts on his hat and leaves. When a girl is in need, they always say it's her fault."

Frustrated Intimacies[18] *and the Refusal to Talk*

All the women who refused to be interviewed reside in Athens and their present socio-economic conditions do not differ substantially from that of those who accepted. These were women who refused to talk about their experience in service, or accepted to be interviewed but concealed that they had been servants. Eleni, one of the interviewees from the island of Folegandros, belongs to the second category. Her interview starts with a tactical self-abasing statement: "I am illiterate and I do not remember the things you ask me", which contrasts with a later statement: "Nobody else would tell you as much as I did," and ends with overt mocking: "I mean that if you hadn't come with a recommendation I would talk but I wouldn't talk for half an hour and tell you all these things. While now I cannot tell you to leave because you came from my Yannis." Accepting to be interviewed was probably a social obligation that did not entail the exposure of the self. Eleni's claims of illiteracy and lack of memory were an attempt to set the rules of the interview and to warn me not to violate her right to "forget." It suggested an indirect refusal to provide any information concerning her working life, as she had been told that I was interested in women who had worked as servants. To implement her strategy of not talking about herself, she provided me with information about the customs of the island, allowing her to claim that nobody else would tell me as much as she did. Thus, while she was talking about her work as a caretaker in a building in Athens after the war and I asked her how many hours she worked, she substituted folklore for work: "I worked from five to nine. In the morning from eight to one. Tiring. Turn it off now [the tape recorder]. Write about the old times. Nobody else will tell you as much as I did. I will tell you about Easter." This was

[18] "Rigoberta Menchu's audible silences and her wordy refusals to talk are calculated, not to cut short our curiosity, but to incite it, so that we feel our differences as frustrated intimacies", Doris Sommer, "Sacred Secrets: A Strategy for Survival", p. 201.

a device that served not only to conceal her identity but to suggest the impossibility of an outsider being able to claim any knowledge of her.

The island of Folegandros is preserved and built in such a way as to provide holiday visitors with the experience of a traditional society. It belongs to a group of islands whose society and space have been used as elements for the formulation of Greek national identity based on cultural continuity, and has served through the incorporation of the culture of the people (architecture, customs, religion, food etc.) to create the myth of Greekness. Thus, talking about topics that were part of what is considered folklore and valued by visitors as well as ethnographers, was a strategy to repudiate curiosity about her life and to mock the outsider's gaze in the community. When she described, for example, Easter, she said: "Many foreigners come here at Easter and glut themselves with food." Here we should note not only the contrast between the holy festival and food, but the word "glut" which is a carnivalesque word. The statement "I am illiterate," a typical reply of peasants encountered by the ethnographer is subverted by the later claim of knowledge.[19]

Eleni's narrative makes use of what Bakhtin calls "grotesque realism." Grotesque realism uses the material body, emphasizing its openings and orifices. Grotesque realism and bodily elements are according to Bakhtin fundamental to carnivalesque laughter. "Carnivalesque laughter [...] is, first of all, a festive laughter. Therefore it is not an individual reaction to some isolated 'comic' event. [...] Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone. [...] Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding."[20] Although the grotesque and the carnivalesque have become epistemological categories, modes of understanding symbolic inversion,[21] they have to be placed against an historical and cultural context in order to understand their use and meaning. Grotesque realism is employed by Eleni to connect past and present, such as when she explains how she married one man while she loved another: "I loved him... But my mother said – I used to follow my mother's advice those years – this [she points at her genitals] had to be taped, not to be untaped. Now this is free, and it goes in and out, in and out." At this point her daughter sighs from the kitchen and Eleni shouts at her: "She came to listen to this, don't

[19] Michael Herzfeld attributes this attitude to an age-old privileged place of scholars in the Greek countryside where peasants expect them to explain rural customs, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece*, University of Texas, Austin, 1982, p. 37.

[20] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (trans. H. Iswolsky), Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1968, pp. 11–12.

[21] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politcs and Poetics of Transgression*, London, 1986, p. 6.

interrupt me. She did not come to see me. She came to learn these things. How it goes in and out."

Using abusive language and mocking words in the context of the interview stands against the serious language of the interviewer representing official culture, and at the same time against the oppressive culture of the community exemplified in parental authority which traded the bodies of girls and used them for labour. The carnivalesque is used to undermine the interview, but it is also a language with which to talk about sexual politics from the standpoint of the present. It is laughter that distances the narrator from the existing order of things in order to reflect critically on the state of the world, to mediate past experience and lay bare the politics that underlie it.[22]

The dialogue between the past and the present is also illustrated in the following excerpt in which the past is used as an explanation for one's position in society and as a means to reflect critically in relation to the present: "We women did not let them to go to school, because of the love letters (*ravasakia*). Most of the girls in those days were illiterate because parents were afraid, in those days it was about virginity. Not to lose your virginity. But now, virginity doesn't count. Where it finds the food, it eats. No matter if it is hungry or not, it will eat. This is the general food. In those days, there were the love letters, not making love, not getting laid (*na min mas plakosoune*)." These grotesque bodily images concentrate on the lower part of the body and openness, juxtaposing it with the closed, impenetrable and pure body which was culturally coded as the "normal" female body.

Anthropological studies have used the concepts "honour" and "shame" as indicators of a cultural affinity between Mediterranean regions. According to Michael Herzfeld "honour" and "shame" are categories of public evaluation which exhibit degrees of conformity to a social code.[23] In different rural areas of Greece, as the interviewees' local cultural concepts illustrate, honour is a concept which designates the norms of chastity and virginity, and thus sexual honour, which is a female attribute. Yet, honour was not straightforwardly theirs: honour lay not with women themselves but above and beyond them in belonging, with their husband (or the man they would marry), father or brother.[24] Loss of honour was a stigma on those to whom the woman belonged. Eleni's grotesque bodily images illustrate the repudiation of ideas of

[22] See Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory*, pp. 22–23.

[23] Michael Herzfeld, "Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems", *Man*, vol. 15, 1980, p. 341.

[24] See Miranda Chaytor, "Husband(ry): Narratives of Rape in the Seventeenth Century", *Gender and History*, vol. 7, no. 3, November 1995, p. 385.

honour from inside the community, an outward-directed criticism to the norms of chastity and virginity of women which has been equated with honor.

Eleni's grotesque imagery rests on a long-standing repertoire of carnivalesque practices of the island of Folegandros. She describes the carnival in Folegandros in the interwar period after her marriage (a point that she mentions twice in order to stress that she was breaking the rules). Her narration works at various levels and involves different layers of meanings. With the expression "once" we enter the realm of the narrative.[25] In the description of the carnival scene, the embodiment of subversion and grotesque, she is the protagonist. She describes how she masqueraded (probably as an animal) and holding an umbrella entered the coffee bar of the island (a place frequented exclusively by men and at the same time a focal meeting point), without anybody being able to identify her. People started to gather around her wondering who was under the clothes and once she had the attention of the whole village, she slapped her brother and ran while everybody followed her. I will not discuss here the control exercised by brothers and the various forms of exploitation of girls by fathers and brothers. The slap on her brother's face was probably a symbolic blow to male authority. Her grotesquely masqueraded body was the denial of the "normal" female body, completely stripped of agency (she was sent to her aunt in Athens, she was called back to take care of her mother who was ill and later of her father, and she married a man she did not want through her brother's, father's and N.'s – a man belonging to the elite of the island – mediation). The carnival scene is about Eleni being the leading, controlling figure, and at the same time unrecognisable, in disguise. It was, in a way, only in disguise, hiding her identity, her gender and social position, that she could be recognised as a protagonist. The whole scene can thus be regarded as a form to express problems of identity in a realm of extreme restriction of agency for women.[26] The use of grotesque bodily images and the masqueraded body can be seen as the means to reclaim a culturally subordinate female body, a ritual strategy of gender-hierarchy symbolic inversion.[27]

---

[25] See Passerini, *Fascism*, p. 20;. Paul Ricoeur argues that expressions like "once upon a time", serve to mark the entry into narrative. He argues that past are narrative tenses not because the past tense expresses past events, but because these tenses are oriented towards an attitude of "uninvolvement." This lack of involvement, a notion Ricoeur borrows from Weinrich but enriches, suspends the belief in the past as "having been" in order to transpose it to the level of fiction. *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (trans. K. Mc Laughlin and D. Pelauer), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988, pp. 68–75.

[26] Passerini, *Fascism*, p. 28.

[27] Pitts views scarification, genital piercing and tattooing as grotesque body work to reclaim the marginal female body. See Victoria Pitts, "Reclaiming the Female Body: Embodied Identity Work, Resistance and the Grotesque", *Body and Society*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1998, pp. 67–84.

The concealment of identity was strategic for this interviewee who employed different devices to implement it. Eleni had been in Athens for 5 or 6 years at her aunt's house. When I asked her if she helped her she replied: "Of course I helped her. She wanted me like a little girl. Not as a servant. Like a child, she did not have children, she wanted company and my parents sent me there." Suddenly, she looked at the tape-recorder (next to her from the beginning of the interview, after I had asked her permission) and said:

> Virgin Mary, is this recording? You build the nest high up and the branch will bend/ the bird will fall down and you will be left with the grief. (*Psila ti xtizeis ti folia/ tha sou ligisei o klonos/ tha pesei kato to pouli/ kai tha sou meinei o ponos*). That's it. I will explain. You are inferior and you try to become superior. Well, where will you go: you will fall, you will end up where you started.

This statement has to be related to her previous claim of ignorance and illiteracy. A constant playing with the subversion of statements between knowing and not knowing, between the entitlement of knowledge of the interviewee and the interviewer and the constant changing of roles, disrupted the rules of an interview and the power of the interviewer who seeks information. The boundaries that she set at the beginning of the interview by claiming ignorance and lack of memory were violated. My violation of her right not to dispose any information about her working life was met with a scornful reaction. The defensive attitude concerning her job as a caretaker shows that it is perceived as a shameful occupation because it challenges the ability of her husband to provide for the family and implies a state of poverty: "I went as a caretaker because my husband was at the cliffs all day. And he took the children with him. Not that I went out of economic necessity. [...] Nor did I not have a good life with my husband. What I tell you is all true."

Jane Flax argues for a mode of subjectivity achieved by isolating certain experiences and aspects that are threatening to affect the dominant part of subjectivity. This isolation can be achieved by turning the experience into an alien and dangerous other.[28] This construction of a lesser other by the dominant part of subjectivity entails the repression of aspects of subjectivity which are in need of control. For those women who chose not to talk or concealed that they had been domestic servants, the evocation of the experience in domestic service and

[28] Flax, "Multiples: On the Contemporary Politics of Subjectivity", p. 46.

identification with a stigmatized occupation threatens to destabilize the positive aspects of their subjectivity.

As we have already seen, a positive public image of domestic service has been absent. The idea of work could not function subjectively as a source of self-esteem and self-recognition, nor could it shape an individual and collective identity. The conditions in domestic service could not be transformed into a political language but were perceived as humiliating and shameful, an individual drama that led to the choice of silence. Silence, as Foucault argues, is not simply the other side of discourse. "There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in each case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses."[29] What underlies the silence of the interviewees who refused to talk is shame, the constant uneasiness produced from their exclusion from the narratives of history, of a culture.

As Stuart Hall argues, "Identity is formed at an unstable point where the 'unspeakable' stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture."[30] A public discourse that would allow a space for the unfolding of the "unspeakable" stories of subjectivity of former domestic servants is absent. The impossibility of talking as servants or about the experience of service is the outcome of the fact that the dialogue between subjectivity and culture could not take place.

There were five women from Kavo Doro and three women from the refugee community who chose not to speak at all. Among them were women whose relatives did not allow them to talk. As Goffman argues, the discredit of the stigmatized person can be extended to family members.[31] Brothers and daughters of potential interviewees did not allow their sisters and mothers to be interviewed, while some daughters did not even permit me to talk with their mothers on the phone. They were afraid that if these former servants made public their experience in service they would share the discredit of a stigmatized person.

---

[29] Michel Foucault, "An Introduction", *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (trans. Robert Hurley), Vintage Books, New York, 1980 p. 27.

[30] Stuart Hall, "Minimal Selves", in *The Real Me: Post Modernism and the Question of Identity*, ICA Documents, no. 6, London, 1987, p. 44.

[31] Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 30.

There was one of the women from Kavo Doro with whom I talked on the phone and she was very uneasy about my knowledge of her having worked as a servant. She refused to be interviewed; she did not want to identify with a servant. We talked several times on the phone without my insisting on interviewing her. We talked about her illness and she asked me about doctors. When I called her back to give her the phone number of a doctor, she asked me: "What do you want to know, that I slept in the attic and they mistreated me?" Domestic service had been a painful experience and there was neither a recognised position from which she could talk, nor was there a language to provide a vocabulary that could voice the injuries of class and incorporate her story. Instead, a narration reduced to an individual drama that cannot be connected with cultural narratives runs the risk of self-victimization and does not permit self-esteem and recognition. Silence testifies to the painfulness of revealing one's own subordinate identity, the lack of any space in which memories might be articulated and the lack of a narrative to accommodate these experiences.

The question then arises why other interviewees could communicate an experience which was understood as humiliating. In the case of refugees, the stories of expatriation and the epic of their survival constitute the collective memory of the community and were transmitted down through generations. Within or parallel to these stories there are other stories that emphasize a specific cultural heritage and continuity, and serve as counter-narratives to the negative attitudes and discourses at local and neighbourhood level (which contrast with official discourses and efforts that tried to incorporate refugees in the national body), taking the form of "speaking bitterness."[32] These are emotional stories that express pride and shame, involving moral and cultural superiority and other characteristics embedded in the mentality of Orthodox Greeks, like cleanliness, industriousness and knowing how to enjoy oneself, which in turn reinforced actual attitudes that transformed the terrifying conditions of living. For the interviewees for whom domestic service was a form of temporary migration, a professional attitude towards domestic service prevails which has to be related to the role of domestic service in the local economy, its organization and working conditions, as well as to positive perceptions of this type of employment by the local community.

[32] I refer here to the genre of Latin American "*testimonio*" defined by John Beverly as a non-fictional, popular democratic form of epic narrative and who relates *testimonio* to the practice of "speaking bitterness" a term popularized in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. John Beverley, "The Margin at the Center: On Testimonio [Testimonial Narrative]", in S. Smith and J. Watson (eds.), *De/Colonizing the Subject*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1992, pp. 94–5.

Ambivalence and Dis-identification

Women who accepted to be interviewed had to leave "outside" those elements that are markers of an inferior status. Their ambivalence about their working identity illustrates the difficulty of relating their subjective experience to the narratives in Greek society about domestic service and the culture of the community in which they belonged. Nowhere is this ambivalence more explicit than in the typical recurring statement: "I was not a servant. They did not treat me like a servant."

Very often parents positioning a child in service did not present it as service but as adoption, as the cases of Galini and Eleftheria show. During the famine of 1941, Eleftheria's mother asked the Patriotic Institution (which before the war provided children of poor families with a fortnight's holiday in a camp) for help and they placed her daughter in service. Through hard work and her treatment as if she were "not a human being" which produced psychological disturbances, she discovered that she had not been sent into service to be saved from hunger. As Eleftheria says, "they did not take me to feed me, they took me as a skivvy [*doulaki*], let's say." After an expedition by her oldest sister, Aggelina (who we met earlier), who was also in service, to save her from her employer, her mother sent her to another family. She talks about her relationship with her mistress:

> The woman showed that she loved me, she wanted me, she didn't have me... of course, she had me doing the chores but at the same time she was raising me as if I was her... I was part of her family, she didn't push me aside, to have me as a little servant [*ipiretriaki*]. [...] She used to send me for bread and vegetables. She would say, "These are the things I want you to get." I went out wearing an apron; me without an apron was out of the question.

Part of what Eleftheria says is related to the ambivalent position of a child in service. Domestic service takes place in a family, a symbolic and actual place in which the traditional mental and spatial categories of private and public are conflated due to the presence of the economy and money into a place in which those elements are supposed to be absent or hidden. Paid domestic labour acquires various meanings for those who are subject to an employment relationship that takes place in a house. Coming from a refugee family of eight children whose material conditions deprived the children of food, tenderness, and care, Eleftheria found these things she was yearning for in the second family to whom she was sent as a servant. In the narration she locates herself in an in-between space: not quite a daughter and not quite a servant. In this in-between space that oscillates between two positions, she is displaced, there is nowhere for her

to speak from. Her dis-identification from the position of servant stands against a previous traumatic experience. Moreover, the categories *doulaki* (skivvy), and *ipiretriaki* (little servant) have to do with a wider cultural denominator of a humiliating and stigmatised identity that is grounded also in the extreme exploitation of child labour and the treatment of children as if they were not human beings. But the dis-identification is suspended as the apron is incorporated in the narrative to remind herself that she was actually a servant.

Wearing an apron was perceived as a stigma symbol[33], a sign that drew attention to a debasing identity within the working-class community:

> -How did you feel about wearing an apron?
> *Evaggelia.* I didn't want it. It seemed to me so ugly, although I was small. Because, you see, we were all there; she took me; I was walking across the street with the little white apron, and whoever came in the house, I had to wear an apron, just a small girl, what was she? And I went to my house crying and I said, "Take me. Take me back." "How can I take you, to do what with you?" she said [her mother].

Body and appearance are central metaphors of social order and serve as indicators of social hierarchy. Yet, as Goffman reminds us, every expression of domination and subordination in social situations "is more than a mere tracing of a symbol or a ritualistic affirmation of social hierarchy. These expressions constitute considerably the hierarchy."[34] The requirement for servants to wear an apron was a domestic way of marking status and denotes inequality in an incorporated form. The apron is one of the strategies of employers to construct the body as a class body, a body that carries the signs of submission to the needs of others. It is a means of displaying the possession of another's body in their service. It invests the body with a signal of difference from the employers' body in order to produce distinction. Through the apron the servant becomes a status symbol. Goffman defines status symbols in the following way: "The social information conveyed by a symbol can establish a special claim to prestige, honor, or desirable class positions [...] – such a sign is called a 'status symbol.'"[35]

This marker distinguishing one's body from a "normal" and "superior" body extends its significance beyond the world of the middle-class house. It makes subordination visible and recognisable to others but it is a signifier that conveys different meanings in the realm of the

---

[33] Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 43.

[34] Quoted in Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (trans. Richard Nice), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984, p. 597.

[35] Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 43.

working-class neighbourhood. In the working-class community, domestic service was equated with living in extreme poverty and the disintegration of family bonds. It attaches the stigma of poverty to those who perform it. This is the meaning that underlies Aggelina's attitude towards entering service: "We had money, I was not to go to a house." The stigma of poverty and not making ends meet is extended to the family the servant originates from. When Y.K., an active member of the refugee community in Kaisariani, was doing military service during the Occupation, his mother went into service. When she told him that she worked for the Ambassador of Turkey, he burst into tears and told her: "Mother, did you fall so low then?"

For a child in domestic service the apron becomes the means of becoming conscious of oneself as different. It is the embodied marker of subordination that reveals the trading of their bodies between mothers and employers, and marks their bodies as items of exchange. The apron is the embodiment of dispossession of one's body, in the sense that is used to strip every sign of agency from it. It is embarrassing because it voices emblematically submission and the poverty that underpins service employment. Moreover, it cannot obscure the fact that the child's body was exchanged for money, when it was presented as adoption. Even in cases when a child finds in employers the care that lacked in her own family, the apron is there to remind her that she sells her labour for love and that she is an item to display her employer's status. The apron is a stigma symbol, a sign revealing the discrepancy between identities and breaking up the coherent picture.[36]

Athina spent most of her life as a servant in one family and continued to do domestic work for the family of her employer's daughter.

> *Athina.* Nah, they didn't have me as a servant, they had me as one of their own people. Everything was kept open. The sweets they made went mouldy [because she did not eat them]. The food I cooked, I couldn't bear to try it. I couldn't. Sometimes it boiled over; I couldn't try it when I put salt. If I put in a lot, I said, it will be salty. Eh, I got used to it afterwards. One day, one evening I lied down, I say, "I am between the devil and the deep blue sea".
> -Why did you say that?
> *Athina.* Because there wasn't anywhere to go. Where could I go? If I left Efstathiou, where would I go?

Stating that she was not treated as a servant but as one of their own people contrasts with the pain that is produced by the claustrophobic sense, reinforced by eating disturbances,

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

of desiring to escape and the impossibility of doing so. The contradictions at the level of subjectivity become apparent here and the only way to resolve them is by denying the position of the servant. "Doesn't the mother scold?" she said. Only by situating herself in the position of the daughter and alienating the working relationship can a whole life in service become acceptable. Dis-identification with the position of servant is the only way to hold the self together. It is the means by which the self appears as coherent.[37] Here again dis-identification is set against other experiences in service. The abundance of food is employed to convey the contrast of her experience to that of other servants she knew. Athina talks about the treatment of servants by her employer's sister: "She had two little servants [*ipiretriakia*]. She made coffee and then rinsed the pot with water and gave them that to drink. He [Athina's employer] used to say to her: 'God will punish you.'"

III. Class Shame

It is not only normative discourses that provide the background against which the problem of identity is articulated. The relationship of servants with employers and their encounter with middle-class life played the most important role in the production of shame. Shame involves the coming to consciousness of oneself, "seeing different parts of ourselves, conscious and unconscious, acknowledged and unacknowledged, suddenly coming together, and coming together with aspects of the world we have not recognized."[38] The employer's house was not only the place in which the incongruity between oneself and social situation is uncovered but it was also the place where one's subordinate position in the world was learned and produced. Class shame is about the uneasiness and anxiety of those who come to realize that they fall short of the standards of middle-class norms. One of the ways of seeing their inadequacy in relation to middle-class norms was through the condemning gaze of their employers. This section will be an attempt to explore the damaging internalization of assumptions of inferiority originating in an outside gaze.[39]

This coming to consciousness of being of a different class is located and marked by memory in the moment of entering service. Here memory reconstructs the moment as a liminal experience. The exactness of the time and date indicates that entering domestic service is perceived as a rite of passage. And although the event is assigned a time and date, this is

---

[37] Beverly Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender*, Sage Publications, London, 1997, p. 13

[38] Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, p.34.

[39] Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, London, Vintage, 1999, p. 167.

derived from religious chronology. The dating of entering service indicates a sense of time in which the future is embodied and fulfilled in the past.

> "It was Saviour's Day, the sixth of August" (Galini).
> "I went on the second of February; the year turned and on the twentififth of October the war started, the day before Saint Dēmetrios' Day" (Evdoksia).
> "I will tell you when I went. I went Easter's *Koufi* [Hollow] week. Eight o'clock I was entering my boss's house" (Athina).

The examination of the encounter of girls in service with material things and the ideas and emotions that are embedded in these things, seeks to illustrate the structure of feeling that is produced through their marginality to these material things.

The houses girls entered were associated in their childhood fantasies with palaces. As they had no visual experience of the interior of middle-class houses, they lacked the vocabulary to describe spaces and objects. Only the language of the fairy tale could provide an iconography that can measure the distance from the settings of their family houses and their neighbourhoods. A language in which the marginality of their lives is inscribed.

> The first day they were looking at me, I was sitting in the kitchen, as if I was an alien, to use the vocabulary that we have recently learned, the new words. So, I was shrunken there, looking at them passing. I didn't speak. From time to time she said, "Stand up, do this, do that, do the other." I did it and of course I didn't know anything about the chores because I was a very small child, and in my house, because my mother did not have a spacious house – she [employer] had four, five rooms, lounges – I didn't know these things. I didn't even know their names. It was as if I had entered a castle, that's how it appeared in my child's imagination. We were very poor.

The dialectical relationship between body and space is exemplary in the above piece in illustrating the embodiment of the structures of the world, the appropriation of the world through the body. The narrative works with juxtapositions, and the roundness and mastery of the balance is amazing for an oral testimony. The small body of the child is contrasted with the vastness of house. The shrunken body with the confidence of the bodies moving around the house. Her silence with the orders and the loud, rigid voice of her employer (she mimics her voice in the narration). The simplicity and intimacy of her mother's house with the vastness and strangeness of the employer's house. Time is compressed in order to encapsulate in a moment the flood of feelings. To reconstruct the feeling of 'alien-ness' produced through the intensity of the other's gaze.

As Gaston Bachelard argues, houses are psychological diagrams and instruments of topo-analysis. Simple images reveal a psychic state. The house is a "psychic state," and even when reproduced as it appears from the outside it bespeaks intimacy.[40] Bachelard agrees with Baudelair's observation that it is the simple house that is the symbol of intimacy. There is no place for intimacy in a palace.[41] Eleftheria's narration starts with an image of herself as an alien produced through the other's gaze and closes with the feeling of alienation, of not fitting in a space engraved in her imagination as a castle.

The psychic state of alienation that the image of the castle conveys is produced through her body inhabiting a space. The juxtapositions are employed to reinforce the difference between her own body and her employer's body in relation to space. The awkwardness of her body situated in a different social and physical space (the employer's house) and the encounter with bodies that carry middle-class dispositions bespeaks the awkwardness of the self. The bodily image is used by Eleftheria to convey the feelings that arise from the positioning of the self in social space.

The house reconstructed in memory is a physical space as well as a social space where social persons are brought together. The bodily hexis that Eleftheria has acquired in her family is the product of history, of her inhabiting a social position whose structures are manifested in the universe of family relationships. The child, as Bourdieu argues, learns the world though its body. "Bodily hexis is political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of *feeling* and *thinking*".[42] Robert Cantwell has also talked about the transmission of culture, though Greil Marcus has rightly substituted history for culture, as passing secretly and silently, carried in the child through looking and listening until it erupts suddenly and unexpectedly in everyday life, in the most trivial situations, through memory and through the narratives we construct to understand ourselves.[43]

Eleftheria's self- image as an alien is produced through the gaze of her employers that reveals to her her inferiority and inappropriateness. It is at that moment that a feeling of the self as inferior bursts out.

---

[40] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, New York, Beacon Press, 1969, p. 72.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[42] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, pp. 93–4.
[43] The full quotation in Marcus, *The Dustbin of History*, p. 3.

The imprint of the condemning gaze of employers and its effects on self-esteem can be illustrated in the realm of cultural capital and the positioning of oneself in relation to it.

> *Athina.* When they bring a bear down from the mountains, she learns.
> [...]
> -Did you go to school?
> *Athina.* I went once.
> -In Petrota?
> *Athina.* No, in Didimoteicho. Afterwards when I needed it, the bird had flown away.
> -Did you learn to read afterwards?
> *Athina.* I didn't learn anything. I couldn't even speak. I came from a village, how could I know. I was ashamed. I saw people and went away [*evlepa anthropo kai apofevga*].

Illiteracy produces shame and feelings of inferiority when a woman encounters a family that draws its legitimacy and status from the possession of cultural capital, and her integrity as a person is measured by her lack of it. Athina worked for a family that placed a great value in education, a value that is reflected in the description of the siblings of her master: "There were six. One was head of the school, the other was a doctor, mine was a military officer. He was a bit ugly, but when he put on his brass [...] Efterpi was married, she was in her glory then. Her husband and Metaxas [the dictator] together."

Before I went to interview her I was warned that she might not be able to talk to me. After I interviewed her, the sister of her employer said: "She is stupid. What does she know to tell about her life? The proof is that she stayed with them all these years." Her timidity and shame was produced through her positioning as "stupid" due to her lack of education. This positioning produces an active and generative set of dispositions that produce in their turn the constant adjustment of an individual to what she is expected to be.

PART TWO

Chapter One

Patterns of Female Employment, 1907-1928

I. Characteristics and Formation of the Workforce

The increase of the rural population in the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with an increase of the agricultural production and the development of merchandized cultivation such as currants but also with an increase in the production of grains. During this period the surplus in the population did not consist of propertyless peasants but, instead, of small landowners, mainly producers of grain, who sought employment in seasonal occupations either in agricultural wage labour or in other professions including industrial work. Thus, the male workforce was characterized by its dependency to the land.[1] The agricultural crisis, which was rooted in the period 1875-1895, when European markets were swamped by agricultural produce, especially grain, from overseas countries, erupted in the 1890 after the crisis in currant production. The migratory movements, which were getting thicker after 1880, and were first oriented to the Greek colonies in Eastern Mediterranean and later to the United States, culminated in the period 1896-1921. During this period 415,000 people migrated of whom 310,000 to the United States. The decrease of population surpluses and the remittances contributed not only to the survival of small agricultural production but also to the monetization of agricultural production and to the process of unification of a previously splintered market.[2] However, it was not only emigration which absorbed the surplus population. Between 1896-1920, the total population of Old Greece increased by 17.7%, while the urban population by 53.8%, and by 78% in the cities with a population above 10,000.

According to Antonis Liakos, two phases characterized the formation of workforce.[3] The first phase covered the period between 1880-1910 and is characterized by the migration of the rural population towards urban areas. This population consisted mainly of male migrants who supplemented an agricultural income with hired work and young women who went into service in order to amass a dowry. The pattern of male migration has been described

---

[1] Antonis Liakos, *Ergasia kai politiki stin Ellada tou Mesopolemou: To Diethnes Grafeio Ergasias kai i anadisi ton koinonikon thesmon* [Labour and politics in inter-war Greece: The International Labour Office and the emergence of social institutions], Athens, Idrima erevnas kai paideias tis emporikis trapezas tis ellados, 1993 pp. 85-95.

[2] Christina Agriantoni, "Viomichania", *I istoria tis Elladas tou eikostou aiona: Oi aparches*, [The history of Greece in the twentieth century, 1900-1922: The origins], vol. 1, Athens, Vivliorama, 2000, pp. 174-6.

[3] Liakos, *Ergasia*, pp. 85-95.

with the term peasant-in-the-village-living-in-town, because the most important feature of this period was the seasonal and temporal character of migration from the rural areas, because the remuneration for urban labour was not sufficient for the reproduction of either the family or of the labour force. Low wages discouraged the enlargement of labour supply while the seasonal character of production characterized the first stage of industrialization in Greece due to the small size of factories. The first two decades of the twentieth century were characterized by major changes on a social and economic level: the creation of an urban labour force, the incorporation of the urban centres of the North in the Greek state, the unionization of the working class and the shaping of a state labour policy. The urban population tripled between 1889 and 1920, though this increase was due to the annexation of towns in Macedonia, Thrace and Crete. The war in Asia Minor was followed by the inflow of 1, 104,217 refugees, of ,whom 660.000 settled in towns. In 1928, the demographic composition of towns with a population of over 20,000 was 35% natives, 33.5% agricultural migrants, and 31% refugees. The agricultural exodus of the period 1890-1912 period as well as the influx of refugees in the second decade of the twentieth century, which culminated in 1922, led to a surplus of labour supply and to the creation of a more permanent labour force in urban centres. The second type of male migration, although for a period the two types co-existed, was characterized by a permanent migration to the city, in which the small holders either abandoned the land altogether and the rural household and moved in urban areas with their families. Thus, the decisive point for the transformation of seasonal and immigrant workforce into a working class was the transference of the family household from rural areas to the city.[4] However, research on the immigrant labour force fails to distinguish between male and female migrants assuming that that all migrants were male or focuses exclusively on male migrants, although the inflow of female migrants in the city was outstanding during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The impact of the female workforce in the industrial development of the period has not been adequately considered in the existing literature. There have been attempts to assess the role of women's and children's supply in industry but these were animated by an analytic perspective which conceived the participation of women as a drawback for the formation of the working class. Fuelled by the acceptance of an ideal model of development based on a unified labour market and identified with large-scale industrial plants, the proletarianization and stages of mechanization, sought to demonstrate the "backwardness" of Greek industry.

---

[4] Liakos, *Ergasia*, p. 88.

Furthermore, the factory system and especially large-scale industry were perceived as a prerequisite for the rise of the proletariat or working class. The co-existence of large-scale industry alongside small workshops, manufactures, and small-scale industry and the large workforce employed in the latter was used to prove the lack of a working class. The concentration of great numbers of women in large-scale industry (perceived as being inside the labour market) while of men in workshops and small-scale industries (perceived as being outside of the labour market) constituted an obstacle for the formation of a proletariat due to women's orientation in the private sphere and to the absence of a skilled workforce in large-scale industry. Large-scale industry was a prerequisite for the existence of a proletariat class which was identified with a formal economy. Economic development and industrialization was based on the binary opposition between pre-industrial and industrial society, associating large-scale industrial production with modern industry and small-scale production with the archaic, as well as on the linear development of the rise of the factory system.[5] Furthermore, as Antonis Liakos has pointed out, these studies identified the workforce (a frozen picture provided by statistical data and categories) with the working class. They disregarded that "[C]lass is a name of a relation, not of a collection of individuals. Individuals occupy places within the system of production; collective actors appear in the struggles at concrete moments of history. Neither of these- occupants of places or participants in collective actions- are classes. Class is the relation between them, and in this sense class struggles concern the social organization of such relations".

The studies already mentioned which have challenged both the concept of development as well as the conceptualization of proletariat in which individuals were classified as members of a class by virtue of the position they occupied in the means of production provided a different insight in the formation of class. However, in these studies the story of the formation of class is written out of class struggle. Class is seen as the product of struggles structured by social relations, that is, political, economic and ideological relations. It has been argued that classes are not given by objective position because they are formed in the course of struggles. Additionally, because classes are the effect of struggles, the process of

---

[5] For a critique of these taken-for-granted assumptions about the causes and the conditions of the industrial revolution has been provided by the work on proto-industrialization which emphasized the role of artisan and small-scale units of production in technological innovation as well as the co-existence and dependency of large-scale factory on small-scale factories or artisan producers. For a critique of the inevitability of large-scale production entailing mechanization and the rise of the factory system see the survey of the relevant bibliography in Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain*, London, Routledge, 1994 (2nd edition), chapter 9, pp. 189-207. A critique of these approaches in Greek historiography is provided by Antonis Liakos, *Ergasia*, pp. 62-95.

class formation is a perpetual one: classes are continually organized, disorganized and reorganized. Yet, this formulation of class completely ignores the feelings and thoughts which are class-orientated but are not transformed into class politics. The history of children's and women's experience of class runs parallel to the dominant narrative of class formation and class struggle. Recent research which has inserted women's labour into the history of class formation argues that the exclusion of women from class politics was a product of masculine ideas of working class.[6] According to this approach, the identity of male worker was built upon the sexual division of labour and the inferior position of women in the division of labour.

II. The Structure of the Active Population

The period between 1907-1940 is characterized by a substantial increase in the workforce, a result of the inflow of refugees and internal migration as well as the annexations and the natural rise in the population. In 1907, the active population comprised 38% of the total population above 10 years of age.[7] Men participated by 93% and women by 7.8%. The proportion of active male population in the total male population was 70% and the respective proportion of women in the total female population above ten years of age was 6%. In 1928 male active population comprised 74% of the total active population and 75.32% of the male population above ten years of age. The participation of women in the total active population was 26% and 26% of the female population above ten years of age. Between 1907 and 1930 the numbers of women employed outside the household increased in all sectors of economic activity. The censuses of 1907, 1920, 1928, 1940 reported 57,052, 243,422, 676,190, 794,322 women in paid employment respectively. There was a substantial increase in the female active population between 1907-1928. If we leave out the participation of women in the primary sector (agriculture, fishing and livestock), it appears, that between 1907 and 1928, the increase of the female active occupation was 11% higher than the respective increase of the total active population.[8] Additionally, during the period 1907-1920, the female active population increased by 62.8%, while the increase in the total population was 50.5%. For the period 1920-1928 period, the respective increase was 35% and 29%.

---

[6] Kostas Fountanopoulos, "Ergasia kai ergatiko kinima sti Thessaloniki, 1908-1936" [Work and the labour movement in Salonika, 1908-1936], Athens 1998 [Unpublished PhD thesis].

[7] Michalis Riginos, *Paragogikes domes kai ergatika imeromisthia stin Ellada, 1909-1936* [Productive sturctures and wages in Greece, 1909-1936], Idrima Erevnas kai Paideias tis Emporikis Trapezas tis Ellados, Athens 1987, pp. 72-75.

[8] Effi Avdela, *Dimosioi ipalliloi genous thilikou*, p. 35.

As for the participation of men in occupations, in 1907, 48% were employed in agriculture and livestock and 15% in industry.[9] The participation rates of women were 35% in industry, 35% in the domestic service sector and 12% in agriculture and livestock. In 1928 56% of men were employed in agriculture and 18.5% in industry, while 73% of women employed in agriculture (increase by 494%) and 16% in industry (54.9% decrease).[10] A different picture though appears when the numbers of the female workforce in agriculture, industry and domestic service are considered. There were 19,708 employed in industry in 1907, 58,652 in 1920 and 99,712 in 1928 while in domestic service there were 19,458 women in 1907, 32,682 in 1920 and 37,377 in 1928 (table 1). There was a five-fold increase between 1907 and 1928 of women employed in industry while for domestic service the numbers almost doubled. There were 6,978 women employed in agriculture and livestock in 1907 and 467,644 in 1928. These numbers show that the 1907 census accounted only for wage-earning jobs and that a large proportion of women employed in agriculture was hidden under the category "without employment" whilst they were actually occupied in family agricultural production.[11] It is therefore misleading to rely on the proportion of female participation in the total population in order to estimate shifts in women's employment for the period 1907-1928.

Firstly, it should be noted that the definition of the active population changed between the censuses. For example, the participation of women in the agricultural sector was under-represented in the 1907 census, while the category "without employment" in each of the censuses conceals considerable numbers of women in family enterprises.[12] Secondly, the annexations during the period 1907-1920 were of mainly agricultural areas, while in the period 1920-28 half a million refugees settled in rural areas which resulted to an increase in the population of Greece by 23.7% (table 3).[13] Land reform and the distribution of land to refugees was a means to curb the adherence of refugees to communist ideas and their concentration in urban centers, which would lead to proletarianization.[14] The Refugees

---

[9] Riginos, *Paragogikes domes...*, p. 74.

[10] Ibid., p. 74.

[11] The socio-economic studies on various rural areas of Greece show that the family was the most important unit in the system of agricultural production which relied substantially on women's labour in the family plots. Furthermore, women's labour was exchanged for the use of ploughs which were borrowed from neighbours while a big number of women worked as wage labourers in cultivations supplementing family income. See, N.E. Aivaliotakis, *O kampos tis Messinias kai ai oreinai lekanai afiou*, Arxeion Georgooikonomikon Meleton tis Agrotikis Trapezis tis Ellados, Athens 1942, pp. 274-8.

[12] Effi Avdela, *Dimosioi ipalliloi*, p. 33.

[13] Manolis Marmaras, *I astiki polikatikia tis mesopolemikis Athinas* [Middle-class building blocks in inter-war Athens], ETBA, Athens, 1991, p.83.

[14] The Prime Minister G. Kafantaris argued that the two factors that could withhold the spreading of the communist ideas in Greece were the incomplete industrial development and thus the absence of dense working

Settlement Committee (RSC) concentrated its efforts at the settlement of refugees in rural areas. In these areas the rehabilitation of refugees concerned not only housing but the provision of tools and agricultural loans. Thirdly, quantitative data on the female labour force participation is not available or reliable, because employers did not register the labour of all women and children employed in factories while imposed overtime especially on female workers without reporting it.[15] Furthermore, home workers supplying orders for factories and children under ten years of age comprised a substantial number, as shown in the reports of labour inspectors and the experience of the interviewees. Thus, the proportions that concern the participation of female active population or the distribution of female active population in occupational categories are hardly comparable.

The rates of participation of women in industry and domestic service show that occupational structure did not change substantially between 1907-1928. However, there is a downward trend in domestic service and a considerable increase in factory work which probably shows that women were more inclined to take a job in a factory than in domestic service. Additionally, the increase of the population attributed to the annexation was mainly rural, while a large part of the refugee population settled in rural areas. Moreover, of the 1,104,217 refugees that resided in Greece in 1928,[16] a large proportion of these were destitute, which led to the widening of the base of the social pyramid. Bearing this in mind, it would be absurd to expect an increase in the proportion of domestic servants in the total population. Nevertheless, we have to abandon the idea that there is a simple correlation between development and the proportion of women in domestic service. Instead of a linear process of development, we have to look the patterns of the household division of labour, the difference between urban-rural populations, the availability of jobs, patterns of occupational segregation, wage levels and differences between industrial production and service-sector jobs.[17] Thus we have to move from a sole consideration of the labour market to the household unit and its structure.

---

masses and agricultural reform: "The masses of refugees might provoke fear. The rehabilitation is proceeding very quickly and very soon the rural refugee population will be occupied in the cultivation of the land of which he will be the owner while the urban refugee population will be directed to the development of its professional labour. [...] Popular tiredness due to the long period of wars is a ground for exploitation against national security. The State has the right to counteract. And it will eliminate it effectively not with the police but through the conquering of popular masses which will be implemented with paternal affection and administrative effort for the bettering of its position". "The opinion of Mr G. Kafantaris", *Ethniki Foni*, 16 Nov. 1924, p. 1.

[15] G.B. Dertilis, Al. Frangiadis, "Oi megaloi stathmoi tis ellinikis oikonomias", *Oikonomikos Tachydromos*, special issue, 23 Dec. 1999, p. 50.

[16] Statistical Annual of Greece, Athens 1930, p. 41.

Between 1922 and 1936 the number of Greek industries increased by 50% while industrial production doubled. There was a fourfold increase in the horse power of its equipment and a three fold increase in the workforce. This increase is attributed to a number of factors: namely, changes in the workforce; the devaluation of the Greek currency and the new tariff policy which created a protected environment; the widening of the market for goods of primary necessity, such as food and textiles, due to the inflow of refugees; the inflow of capital from wealthy refugees which was invested in industry, land and property, which contributed to the growth of the building industry during the interwar period. Foodstuffs were the most important industry which was reflected in number and size of establishments. The milling and textile industries expanded to a great proportion and imports of woolen cloth, and cotton-weaving thread fell substantially. Furthermore, state policy reinforced the increase of small manufactures and workshops and in Athens and Piraeus.

Table 1. Number of domestic servants in Greece (1861-1928)

	1861	1870	1879	1907	1920	1928
Female	7, 724	10,808	15,598	19,458	32,682	37,141
Male	12,651	17,482	25,437	14,404	19,414	4,532
Total	20,375	28,290	41,035	33,862	52,096	41,673
Female workers	-	5,735*	4,732	19,708	58,652	99,712

Source: 1870, *Oikonomiki Epitheorisis*, Athens, p. 14. Censuses 1861, 1870, 1878, A. Makris , *Statistikai Meletai*, Athens, EKKE, 1972, p. 142. In 1861, the category female worker did not exist. Ministry of Economics, *Statistique Générale de la Grèce, Population de fait de 10 ans et plus sexe et profession principale et secondaire, recensement de 27 Octobre 1907*, Athens 1908. Ministry of Economics, *Statistique Générale de la Grèce, Population de fait de 10 ans et plus sexe et profession principale et secondaire, recensement de 19 Decembre 1920*, Athens 1924. Ministry of Economics, *Statistique Générale de la Grèce, Population de fait de 10 ans et plus sexe et profession principale et secondaire, recensement de 15-16 Mai 1928, III Professions*, Athens 1932.

*includes agricultural labourers, proprietors of small enterprise and servants.

[17] Louise Tilly, "Does Waged Domestic Labor Have a Future?", *International Labour and Working-Class History*, no. 39, 1991, pp. 70-1.

Table 2. Age distribution of domestic servants in 1928

Age	Female	Male
10-19	20,270	2,486
20-29	9,064	531
30-39	3,009	326
40-49	2,128	346
50-59	1,428	365
Above 60	1,131	460

Source: *Census of Population, 15-16 May 1927, III Professions*, Athens 1932.

Table 3. Population of Greece, 1853-1928

Year	Population
1853	1,035,527
1856	1,062,627
1861	1,096,810
1870	1,457,894
1879	1,679,470
1889*	2,187,208
1896	2,433,806
1907	2,631,952
1920**	5,016,889
1928	6,204,684

Source: *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, no. 10, Oct. 1929 ,p. 2.

*Thessaly and Arta were annexed in 1881.

**Annexation of Macedonia, Ipeiros, Crete and Aegean Islands took place in 1913-4 and of Western Thrace in 1919-20.

The participation of women in the industrial sector rose between 1907 and 1928. In 1907, female participation was 16%, 20%in 1920, and 23% in 1928. The composition of workforce in industry shows that there was a rigid segregation between sexes not only in factories but also sectors. Women were concentrated in textiles, clothing, paper and tobacco industries (table 4). The participation of women in textiles in 1920 was 74%, in clothing 61%, in the paper and tobacco industry 41% and 49%, respectively. There were differences within the age composition of male and female workforce: males under 18 years of age comprised 23% of the male workforce while females comprised 43%. In addition, the sex and age composition of the workforce in respect to the size of enterprise shows that there was a concentration of women and juveniles in big enterprises. The figures were 2.8% and 4.3% for

small-scale enterprises (1-5 persons employed), 10.67% and 10.12% for medium-sized (6-25), and 14.32% and 26.4% (25 and above) in large-scale enterprises for women and juveniles.

Strict gender segregation in industry and workshops and low wages (female wage was 50% less than male) were characteristic of female workforce.[18] The supply of certain industries with predominantly female labour force was encouraged by the inflow of the refugees whose population consisted mainly of women and children, that is, by the age and gender structure of this population. The inflow of refugees created a pool of workers who did not have any other alternatives except to enter factory work. The investigation of five big industries (tapestry, weaving and spinning factories, hat-factories, paper and woolen factories) and in 219 factories in 1928 showed that 75% (12,098) of the total employees were refugees out of which 10,960 were women and only 1,138 men.[19] The report of the Ministry of Economics in 1928 on the working conditions of employees in industries and workshops indicates that 44% of women earned a "wage of hunger", 5-20 drachmas a day, while 43% an "inadequate wage" of 20-50 drachmas.[20] Greek industry used female labour as a cheap and flexible input. The female labour force was concentrated in certain industrial sectors such as the textile industry, tapestry making, and the tobacco industry (table 5). The female labour supply was used to challenge competition to Greek tapestry-making from the Middle East. This was achieved by keeping female wages down. According to Michalis Riginos, until 1927 the wage rates of women in industry were at the same level as those in 1914-16. In weaving factories the low cost was achieved by stretching the working day. The introduction of eight-hour day was postponed until 1937. As Maxine Berg argues, "[t]here was a special place for women's and children's labour in the early industrial period which has only recently found a parallel in the decentralized production processes in manufacturing in Third World and

---

[18] Elliot Grinnell Mears gives an example of the considerable less lower wages of women than those accorded to men from data supplied by the Greek Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry in 1925; Elliot Grinnell Mears, *Greece Today: The Aftermath of the Refugee Impact,* Stanford University Press, California, 1929, p. 113.

Comparative wages in Greece, 1925 (per day)

	Men	Women
Weavers	19-38	13-27
Soap-makers	25-37	7-15
Workers in chemical factories	26-38	12-15
clothing cutters	17-34	6-12

[19] Maria Svolou, "How the Greek woman works in five industries", *O Agonas tis Gynaikas*, no 70, 15 June 1928, p. 3.

[20] Anna Makropoulou, "Report of the Ministry of Economics on the working conditions of employees in industry and workshops", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 114, 15 April 1930, p. 6.

advanced industrial countries".[21]

The employment of women workers in certain industries cannot be attributed solely to the low wages paid to women and children compared to the wages of men. Whole new methods of production, including management practices, divisions of labour and technologies could be more easily implemented bypassing artisan customs and arrangements.[22] The employment of female workforce in industries facilitated the introduction of new divisions of labour and organization of production, as well as of the labour process, which would meet the resistance of the adult male workforce. In certain industries such as in tapestry-making certain skills were associated with women and had been learned in the places of origin not only in workshops but also in domestic industries. The impact of the female workforce in industrial development of the period has not been assessed.

According to the first estimations in December 1922, women, children and elderly people comprised 85% of the total refugee population.[23] Of this figure, 38% were women, 34% men and 28% children under ten years old. As far as the age and sex composition of the refugees is concerned, in 1928, there were 414,562 males, 464,015 females and 343,272 children under the age of ten. In addition, 28% were under 15 years of age, 44% in the 15-39 age group, 20% between the ages of 40 and 59 and 8% above 60 years of age.[24] The active refugee population comprised 19% of the total active population, while 24% of the active refugee population was employed in industry. In the secondary sector during the period between 1920-1928 the total active population increased by 46%. Refugees contributed to this increase by 84%, men by 68% and women by 31.5%. The female refugee population was concentrated in industry, while a large proportion was employed in domestic service (table 6). 72% of the urban refugee female workforce was employed in industry and 15.5% in domestic service. According to the 1928 census on the employment of refugees above ten years old, there were 7,730 female servants, which constituted one quarter of the total female servant population, and 772 male servants.

---

[21] Berg, *Age of Manufactures*, p. 31.
[22] Ibid., p. 149.
[23] Michalis Riginos, *Morfes paidikis ergasias sti viomichania kai ti viotechnia, 1870-1940* [Forms of child labour in industry and manufactures, 1870-1940], Athens, Geniki Grammateia Neas Genias, 1995, p. 49.
[24] Eva Sandis, *Refugees and Economic Migrants in Greater Athens*, Athens 1973.

Table 4. Males and Females Employed in Industry, 1928 (Greece)

Industry	Male	Female	Total
Textiles	29,221	72,440	101,661
Tobacco	28,210	20,375	48,585
Food	36,251	1,407	37,658
Chemical	2,036	268	2,304
Construction	58,932	405	58,527
Power	6,500	53	6,553
Metal	44,665	434	45,099
Wood	53,564	1421	54,985
Leather	62,669	1,252	63,921
Paper	6,873	1,305	8,178
Without spec.	1,603	352	1,955
Total	330,524	99,712	429,426

Source: Census of population 1928, III. Professions, Athens, 1932

Table 5. Distribution of refugees in industry in 1928 (Greece)

Industry	Male	Female	Total
Textiles	8,198	21,627	29,826
Tobacco	8,760	12,296	21,056
Food	9,665	517	10,182
Chemical	474	139	613
Construction	12,840	174	13,014
Power	1,091	13	1.104
Metal	10,150	133	10,283
Wood	11,357	263	11,620
Leather	13,762	289	14,051
Paper	1,827	455	2,282
Without spec.	481	299	481
Total	**78,424**	**35,088**	**114,512**

Source: *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, no. 10, Oct. 1929

Table 6. Distribution of refugees in professions in 1928

Professions	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture	146,698	95,426	242,124
Cattle-raising	7,899	1,185	9,084
Industry	78,424	36,088	114,512
Domestic service	772	7,730	8,502

Source: *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, no. 10, year 1, Oct. 1929.

III. The Structure of the Female Workforce in Athens

Between 1870-1920 the population of the city of Athens increased substantially, while it was transformed from an administrative centre to a centre of industrial production, in particular after the turn of the century (table 7). After the economic crisis of the last decades of the nineteenth century, out of the 137 new factories built during the period 1910-1921, 20 were established in Athens and 37 in Piraeus while the number of big factories increased between 1870 and 1920, from 38 factories in 1876 to 63 in 1900. This had risen to 868 in 1920.[25] Furthermore, 33% of the Greek industrial workforce was concentrated in Athens and the surrounding areas. Between 1921 and 1927, 690 new factories were established, most of them small with an average capacity of 25 to 30 horsepower producing a wide range of commodities.[26] There were 4,000-6,000 bourgeois families in 1909 and 8,000 in 1928.[27]

The distribution of female workforce in industry and domestic service in Athens between 1920-1928 shows that in 1920, 27% of the total female workforce were employed in domestic service and 36% in industry, while in 1928 the respective proportions were 21% and 36% (table 8).[28] As for the female workforce employed in industry and domestic service, in

---

[25] Lila Leontidou, *Poleis tis siopis: ergatikos epoikismos tis Athinas kai tou Peraia, 1909-1940* [Cities of Silence: Working-class settlement in Athens and Piraeus, 1909-1940], Athens, ETVA, 1989, pp. 105-6.

[26] Mears, *Greece Today: The Aftermath of the Refugee Impact*, p. 103.

[27] Leontidou, *Poleis tis siopis*, p. 188.

[28] The 1861-1879 censuses use the categories "*ypiretriai*" (female servants) and "*ypiretes*" (male servants). The 1907 census for the province of Attica used the category "*prosopikai kai oikiakai ypiresiai*" (personal and domestic services). The 1920 census for Athens used the category "*ipiretikon prosopikon oikogeneion*" (servant staff of families) while the census in 1928 the category "*prosopikai ypiresiai*" (personal services) although for the whole of Greece the sub-category "*oikiakoi ypiretai*" (domestic servants). "Personal and domestic services" in 1907 included wet-nurses, stewards, domestic servants, guardians, stable attendants, housekeepers, valets, grooms. "Personal services in the 1928 censuses included shoe polishers, spa entrepreneurs and hairdressers but

1920 43% were employed in domestic service and 57% in industry, while in 1928 the respective proportions were 37% and 67% (table 9). Thus, although the female workforce in industry remained stable between 1920-1928, there was a decrease in the proportion of servants both in the total female working population and in the female workforce, in industry and domestic service.

The move from domestic service to factory work can be illustrated from the disproportion between the supply and demand of domestic servants in 1935 during a period of high unemployment. In 1927, Maria Svolou had identified the shortage of domestic servants.[29] The Employment Office of the National Council of Women established in October 1934 provides an indication of the "servant problem" as the number of employers demanding domestic servants was considerably larger than the number of servants searching for employment. 28 servants resorted to the employment office while the number of employers asking for a servant was 111.[30] In 1939 the same office declared that female domestic servants were immediately placed in houses. Even if the networks of employment for female workers

---

the numbers for women were very small. In the whole of Greece 18 spa entrepreneurs, 149 hairdressers and 4 shoe polishers were registered.

[29] Maria Svolou, "Labour bills", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 53, 15 Sept. 1927, p. 3.

[30] *Ellinis*, no 6, June 1935, p. 122.

Supply and demand of female labour in 1935

Type	Employees	Employers
Clerks	17	0
Teachers	46	4
Workers	6	1
Cleaners	50	2
Chambermaids	14	2
Embroiderers	8	1
Cooks	9	13
Nurses	10	4
Nursery nurses	11	1
Housekeepers	37	2
Shop-girls	2	0
Seamstress	43	1
Cashiers	11	0
Domestic Servants	28	111
Typists	27	2

and domestic servants were neighbourhood or community based, the number of employers searching for female domestic servants as opposed to the number of domestic servants seeking employment was so big that it offers a strong indication of the shortage of domestic servants during the interwar period.

Nevertheless, the numbers of domestic servants indicated in the statistical data appear much lower than they actually were, as only the population over ten years old was registered. A great number of juvenile domestic servants under the age of ten was reported by the inspectors of labour as well as by the police reports, journalists and feminists during the interwar period. The enforcement of the prohibition of labour for children under fourteen years old at the end of 1920s and particularly in the 1930s created a pool of juveniles who could not enter factory work. Domestic service was, thus, the only available job as it remained outside labour legislation. Its exclusion and the failure of the attempts for the extension of labour legislation to domestic service was a result of the shortage of servants that created great anxiety for the middle-class who took advantage of this new labour supply. Besides, the majority of the interviewees, both refugees and rural migrants, entered domestic service under ten years of age. Furthermore, the war in Asia Minor resulted in a great number of orphans who were directed by institutions into domestic service. The ubiquity of six- and seven-year old servants, who became part of the campaign for the prohibition of child labour, was not a new phenomenon attributed exclusively to the inflow of orphan children and destitute families from Asia Minor who were composed mainly of women, children and elderly people. It was an effect of the diffusion of ideas of childhood which were incompatible with children's labour but also of an unprecedented level of exploitation of the labour of children.

In addition, female participation in the labour market has to be examined in relation to the household context and family economy, to the gendered market segmentation, to the local economy as well as to the cultural perceptions of labour in different communities. It will become apparent that domestic service was a family strategy for both rural and urban population, although the patterns of children's and women's employment varied according to the place of origin, the functioning of local economy and the availability of labour. The concentration on household units rather than on the labour market shows that the reproduction of the family was based on the mobilization of the labour of all the members of the family whose budget was composed of earnings from multiple economic activities.

Table 7. Population of Athens (1896-1940)

Municipality	1896	1907	1920	1928	1940
Athens	123,001	167,479	292,876	384,731	481,225
Piraeus	50,200	73,579	133,482	189,648	189,620
Rest	139	1,270	26,679	223,123	453,264
Total	173,340	242,328	453,037	795,502	1,124,109

Source: Manolis Marmaras, *I astiki polikatoikia tis mesopolemikis Athinas*, Athens, 1991, p. 99.

Table 8. Distribution of working population in industry and domestic service in Athens, 1879-1928

Professions	1879	1907	1920			1928		
Service	Athens	Attica	Athens*	Piraeus	A&P	Athens	Piraeus	A&P& Kallithea
Female	2,965	8,778	9,599	2,364	11,923	12,267	2,216	14,830
Male**	3,629	3,559	1,494	393	1,887	3,589	1,345	5,516
Total	6,594	12,337	11,093	2,757	13,850	15,856	3,561	20,346
Industry***								
Female	656	9,739	10,166	5,887	16,053	14,938	9,527	25,065
Male	2,602	47,736	35,298	18,758	54,056	49,195	26,854	77,805
Total	3,258	57,475	45,463	24,645	70,108	64,133	36,381	102,870

Source: Makris , *Statistikai Meletai*, p. 144-5; Ministry of Economics, Statistical Results of the Census of the Population, 27 October 1907; General Census of the Population of Greece of 19 Dec. 1920, Athens 1927; Census of Population, 16 May 1928, III Professions, 592-3.

*Domestic staff of families.

** The 1928 census includes shoe polishers, barbers and spa entrepreneurs.

***All employed in industry.

Table 9. Distribution of females in industry and domestic service in Athens, 1879-1920

	1879	1907	1920			1928		
Professions	Athens	Attica	Athens	Piraeus	A&P	Athens	Piraeus	A&P& K
Service	2,965	8,778	9,599	2,364	11,962	12,267	2,219	14,830
Industry	656	9,739	10,166	5,887	16,053	14,938	9,527	25,065
Total* female workforce	4,002	20,919	31,458	12,693	44,151	43,600	23,587	69,008

Sources: ibid.

*All professions

Chapter Two

The Status of Children's and Women's Labour in State Policy (1920-1940)

This part aims at exploring the position of women and children in state policy and in public discourses (labour legislation, the reports of the Commission for the implementation of labour legislation, public and private institutions) and tries to establish a link between the absence of regulation for service employment and the ideas and practices of state and private institutions. It attempts, through the fragments of information available about servants in the public sites stated above, to reconstruct the "others' gaze upon a society built on silence and the exclusion of the other"[1]. Furthermore, it tries to show how the "marginality of a majority" was created not only through the use of servant labour by institutions but also its exclusion from certain policies, as well as through the uses of the figure of the servant as a means to launch political claims for the regulation of both the middle- and working-class families.

I. Legislation on Children's and Women's Labour

Before 1910 labour legislation was not a concern of the Greek state. During the second decade of the twentieth century, labour legislation was introduced for the first time by the Liberal government of Eleftherios Venizelos as a way to deal with the increasing social antagonisms and to curb the formation of a revolutionary subject.[2] The first legislative action concerning the employment of women and children was taken under the 1910 Act On Mine Work. Without setting a minimum age for working children, it abolished night work for women and it only permitted the labour of children under the age of 12 in the collection of minerals. Female and child labour were handled together under the 1912 law on the employment of juveniles and women. Childhood and womanhood were defined as states in need of protection by law.[3]

Although a different reasoning was presented for the regulation of children's labour to that of women's, their subjection to the same law presupposes the perception of women as

---

[1] Michel de Certeau, "The Beauty of the Dead" in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

[2] Georgios Leondaritis, "The Greek working-class movement and the bourgeois state", in Thanos Veremis, Odisseas Dimitrakopoulos (eds.), *Meletimata giro apo ton Venizelo kai tin epoxi tou* [Studies on Venizelos and his Era], Athens, Filippotis, 1980, p. 52.

[3] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, 4029 Act On the Employment of Women and Juveniles Act, 28 January 1912, no. 46, 7 Feb. 1912.

dependent and weak and illustrates the ideological equation of their status to that of children. The need to control women's and children's employment was justified on the grounds of national interest and the protection of the family. It was argued that the damaging effects of labour on the physiological development of children resulted in the exhaustion of vital forces and in the production of infirm generations, of uneducated citizens and weak soldiers. In addition, the law attempted to prevent the substitution of child for adult labour in industry and the reduction of the wages of adult workers. Women's labour was in need of protection because it was assumed that they were weaker in terms of physical strength compared to men and because of their role in the family due to their reproductive capacities.

The Employment of Women and Children Act prohibited the employment of children under the age of 12 in industrial and in merchant enterprises.[4] Children between the age 12 and 14 were permitted to work for up to six hours a day, while for those aged between 14 and 18 the limit was placed at ten hours. Night labour for women and children was prohibited while the hours of night resting were set to eleven. The Act permitted the employment of children above 10 on the condition that they were employed in a family enterprise. In addition, street trading worried protectionists because of its alleged connection with delinquency. Under the Act, street trading was prohibited for children under 16 but an exception was made for male newspaper sellers, shoe polishers and bread carriers over 12 years old, which were jobs done mainly by children. The enactment of 1913 extended the prohibition for girls under 18 and boys under 16 in industries where materials dangerous to the health were used as well as for boys under 15 and for all women in mining. Moreover, in 1920, the 2271 Act On the definition of 14 years of Age as the Minimum Age for the Employment of Juveniles in Industry and on Night Work for Juveniles ratified the Washington treaty and raised the minimum age to 14 which was to come into on 1st July, 1922.

The Act was concerned with certain kinds of employment, mainly industrial labour and street trade. These were the two types of work that were deemed to expose children to danger. However, with regard to factory work there were several exceptions as well as by-laws added with exclusions, which prevented the law from being effectively implemented especially where working hours were concerned. This ensured that the law could not go against the interests of industry. Additionally, not all types of work were considered as

[4] It included factories and workshops, mines, construction sites, transportation, stores and sales-rooms, restaurants, coffee shops, wine shops, confectionery, hotels. .Ministry of Economics/ Sector of Labour and Social Welfare, Legislation on the Employment of Women and Children, Athens 1913.

damaging for children. Agricultural work was left completely out of the scope of the law on the basis that it did not obstruct school attendance and it was not harmful to children. Domestic service was also excluded from regulation. Thus, it appears that the law was reluctant to interfere in family enterprises and in agriculture where the labour of children was crucial for agricultural production. In addition, there was no desire to intervene in the private sphere of the middle class family by regulating domestic service employment. This, as it will be demonstrated, was left to be controlled by Police Headquarters.

In Greece legislation on women's and children's employment was not the result of a large-scale campaign or of demands launched by different groups in society. Rather the introduction of the law was considered as part of a civilizing process that all nations should follow. The legislation on women's and children's labour was an importation of the model of the existing legislation in European countries without previously establishing the intermediate modifications which were necessary to respond to the needs of society. The result was that the law was never implemented. Even as late as 1931 the Report on the Commission on the bill for the regulation of the labour market admitted that the law for child labour was never enforced in practice while in 1929 Andrian Tixier, Director of the Social Insurance of International Labour Office, found shocking the extension of child labour in industry and the violation of hours of work.[5]

Since 1919 social policy was characterized by its internationalization. In 1919 the International Labour Office was established to develop an international code of labour legislation and to handle labour issues through the co-operation of the state, workers' and employers' organizations. A number of international treaties were released and the Greek government was invited to participate in the international labour forums that began in 1919 in Washington. Greece was the first country to ratify the treatises that concerned women's and children's employment, the protection of motherhood, unemployment and the introduction of eight-hour day (although the government succeeded in securing its delay and many exceptions). The Washington Treaty, which abolished night work for women, could be revised every ten years during a period of one year. The treaty was revised and suspended the prohibition of night labour for some professions. The International Council of Women suggested during the International Labour Conference, in which the revision of the treaty was discussed, to exclude from the prohibition "all women that are not employed in manual work". This revision was not accepted except for women who held the position of director. Besides, it

---

[5] See Antonis Liakos, *Ergasia*... pp. 451,454, 462-63.

suggested to industrial states to employ a bigger number of female inspectors.[6]

The legislative bodies of the state ratified the treaties but they were not implemented. The arguments used to justify the violation of the labour legislation and especially the employment of children and women were culturally, economically and socially orientated. Firstly, the suspension of the law on the age of children was requested on the grounds of the Mediterranean climate. Children, it was argued, in Greece develop physically and mentally earlier than those from northern countries. Children finish compulsory education when they are twelve years old thus they "can not be used" until that age. The idea was that children at the age of twelve could be used in industrial sectors where their work was actually crucial for the vitality of certain trades due to the low wages they earned.[7] Furthermore, two years of idleness would be dangerous for their moral development and thus for society. The second argument was that the Minor Asia disaster and the low number of adult males made child labour a key factor for their survival and that any measure that would lead to the withdrawal of children from factories and workshops would impede the establishment of new industries and the development of existing ones.[8] The third argument deployed to justify the reluctance of the Greek government to implement the eight-hour day was that the Mediterranean climate and the sunshine enabled workers to work more hours without endangering their health.[9] The same reasoning was used to legitimize the low wages of workers: the climate affected the needs and the diet of the Greek worker so that they could live with less food.[10] Thus, the use of all the labour resources of the family compensated for the low wages and poverty of working class families.

II. Reports on Labour Legislation

A. Child Labour

In 1911 the office of Labour and Social Welfare was established as a branch of the Ministry of National Economic Affairs and in 1912 a body of inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation was formed. [11] The law contained the provision that inspectors should submit reports twice a year (January and July of each year) to the Ministry of Economics which

---

[6] Amalia and Aigli Psalti, "International Council of Women Conference", *Ellinis*, no 4, 1934, pp.186-194.

[7] A.M Andreadis in Leontaritis, "The Greek working-class movement...", p. 59

[8] See Antonis Liakos, *Ergasia*... p. 312.

[9] A. M. Andreadis in Leondaritis, "The Greek working-class movement...", p. 59

[10] For the reproduction of this argument see, Henry Morgenthau, *I was sent to Athens*, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1929, p. 250.

[11] 4029 Act On the labour of women and juveniles, article 21. *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, On the duties of

should include "remarks on the protection of young people and female workers" and "on the economic and moral condition of the working classes".[12] The law contained a number of measures in order to enforce its effectiveness, namely: a) Juveniles had to be supplied with a "work booklet" in which details about their recruitment and redundancy had to be registered. In addition, they had to be provided with a health certificate b) employers had to inform the police of the recruitment of minors who were under 18 and to create a list with the names of juvenile and female workers; c) penalties were set against employers who violated the law and against parents. The inspectors stated that none of these measures was enforced: the age of juveniles was not possible to check because birth certificates for girls did not exist whilst many children were refugees therefore their age could not be checked either. It was enough to present two witnesses before the mayor to affirm a child's age. As a result, ten year-old children were found with a working booklet in which they were registered as thirteen year olds. County doctors also supplied many sick children with a false health certificate.[13] Furthermore, the provision that limited to six the working hours for children between 12-14 was not implemented. The provisions which dealt with the conviction of the father or the mother were not enforced, likewise, the police did not intervene in the case of street selling.[14]

In Greek society in the 1920s and 1930s, child labour was not considered completely incompatible with childhood and children's earnings were indispensable for working-class families and especially for refugee families. In 1928 there were 246,062 refugees from Asia Minor in Athens, the majority of whom were widows and orphans. In addition, 20% of the refugee families were single-mother families. The reports investigating child labour stated that the law could not be enforced because the Ministry had recognized the importance of children's earnings for their survival and the survival of their families. In addition, it was argued that the removal of children from workshops would deteriorate their health and morals because they would be devoid of wages and spend all day in the streets. "In order for the number of juveniles in workshops to be decreased, a system of Social Welfare institutions needs to be implemented, which in other countries protects the worker from his birth until his death. Every other kind of mechanistic measures for the exclusion of children from work does not protect them apart from the very few cases of children who become exploited by their

---

inspectors and supervisors of labour constituting the body of inspectors on labour, no. 229, 28 July 1912.

[12] On the duties of inspectors, article 16.

[13] *Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Dieflhinsis Ergasias, Ektheseis tou prosopikou Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon to etos 1921*, Athens 1923 , p. 13 [Ministry of Economics, Reports of the body of inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation in 1921, Athens 1923].

[14] Ibid., p. 14.

parents due to their ignorance or covetousness".[15] Schooling was perceived as the only alternative to idleness and moral evils. However, the report stated that the majority of parents removed their children from school without having completed elementary education either because they did not have money to pay for books, clothes and shoes or because they considered their education as useless, so to exploit them out of necessity or maliciously.[16] It was easier to argue that the provision of employment for children was tolerated due to the conditions and composition of the refugee population than to argue that it was more profitable to reduce adult male labour.

One of the main arguments for the prohibition of the labour of children under fourteen-year of age was the need to complete elementary education. Schooling provided the only means of removing children from industry. Schooling and children's labour were inextricably linked with each other.[17] In an investigation on silk industry out of 2,281 employees there were 295 men and 1,986 women while 65% were refugees. Of this total, 1,028 women had not attended school at all, while 429 had attended until the third grade, 408 fourth grade, 109 fifth grade, and only 10 had attended the sixth and seventh grade.[18] None of the interviewees had finished primary school. In the survey investigating illiteracy in factories, the percentage of illiteracy among female workers was 49%.

In 1920 the inspectors found more than one thousand juveniles in industry but they did not remove these children because it was feared that their withdrawal would provoke social unrest. According to an investigation conducted in the spinning factories of Piraeus in 1921, out of 2,000 female workers 78% stated that they had started working between the age of 10-12 years old and some since they were seven years old. Of this number 10% of female workers in industry were under fourteen years-old, out of whom 3% were under twelve years-old, while 7% were between the ages 12 and 14.[19]

During 1927-1928, the inspection of 155 industries and manufactures in Athens, Piraeus, N. Ionia, Kallithea, and N. Kokkinia showed that out of 15,084 working males and females there were 106 boys and 1,805 girls under fourteen years of age. Additionally, 1,479

---

[15] Anna Makropoulou, "Women's and children's work", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no 50-51, 1-5 August 1927, p. 5.

[16] Reports of the body of inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation in 1921, Athens 1923, p. 12.

[17] Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930*, London, Virago, 1995, p. 133.

[18] "The working conditions of women in silk industry", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 60, 15 Jan. 1928, p. 6.

[19] In the box-making industry the percentage of female juvenile workers was 8%, in tailoring 7%, in umbrella-making 6%, in spinning and weaving industry 4%, in hat-making 3% and in dress-making 2%. See, Maria Svolou, "The Greek female worker", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 7, Feb. 1924, p. 3.

were orphans of whom nine tenths were refugees.[20] The majority of female juvenile workers was concentrated in carpet making, the silk industry and box making while a large number of boys worked in small shoe-making workshops, tailoring, and carpenters' and blacksmiths' workshops.[21]

There was an ongoing tension in the reports of inspectors between their belief that parents sent their children to work out of lack of education and out of the simple desire to exploit them economically and the admission that their labour was a necessary supplement for the family budget. Those who participated in the formation of the state social policy argued that without institutions and measures to support the working class family neither mass schooling could be enforced nor could the removal of children from work be implemented. There is a shift in the approach to child labour and to poverty in the 1928 report. Moral interpretations of poverty retreated while child labour was not anymore treated as a fault of parents who exploit their children or a result of conspicuous consumption and drunkenness. In contrast, it is now stressed the lack of vocational education, the cost of schoolbooks, clothes, and registration expenses and the rise of the cost of living. The lack of education and the high rates of illiteracy were attributed solely to economic reasons.[22]

The importance of child labour in industry should not be neglected. The mechanization of production and the desire to maintain costs low led employers to an excessive use of child labour. The large concentration of children in industry -- children and young people under 18 comprised the 30% of the total workforce in industry and workshops in 1930 -- indicated the difficulties for the implementation of the law, as employers were hostile towards any kind of child regulation, considering legislative intervention as destructive and premature for Greek industry. Trade unions campaigned for the abolition of child labour, seen as contributing to adult unemployment and as undercutting men's wages. Blacksmiths demanded the 14-year-old limit to be increased on the basis that it was unhealthy environment for juveniles and contributed to the unemployment of adult workers.[23] The government was clear on stating that the law could not be enforced and that poor children could not be

---

[20] *Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Diefthinsis Ergasias kai Koinonikis Pronoias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Perilipsis ton ekatheseon tou prosopikou Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon dia ta eti 1927-1928,* Athens 1930 [Ministry of Economics, Department of Labour and Social Welfare, Summary of the reports of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation 1927-8, Athens 1930], p. 6.

[21] Ibid., p. 7.

[22] Ibid., p. 7.

[23] *Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Ekatheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon kai ton sinthikon ergasias en Elladi kata to 1933*, Athens 1935 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of

protected. Social reforms had to be abandoned because the labour of children was significant for the economic development of the country.[24] Thus, there was an unresolved tension between the idea that children had to be protected in order to become efficient adult wage-earners and the idea that releasing children from economic contribution would ruin the country economically.

In 1928, the Minister of Economics Nikolaos Velentzas visited the Kerkini weaving and wool mills in Podarades (Nea Ionia) and was made aware that 50% of the employees were children between twelve and sixteen-year old. But he stated that the State was in absolutely no position to enforce the measures for children before passing the bill on employment insurance and unemployment benefit as well as the bill on the protection of industry and on vocational education and schools, which would make it compulsory for juveniles to follow a specific employment.[25]

In the 1931 report it was stated that the number of juveniles in industry had started to be reduced which was attributed to the diminishing of the economic deprivation. The withdrawal of children from industry led inspectors no longer tolerate breaches of the law and consequently, all the children found in industry and workshops were removed and the employers were prosecuted.[26] In spinning and cotton factories there was a large number of female juveniles, mainly refugees. After 1929 this number started to decrease so that the body of labour legislation decided to enforce the law.[27] They argued that "it was better for a young organism to be fed inadequately and even to wander around in the clear air than to be imprisoned in the unhealthy atmosphere of the factory, where physical and moral dangers lurk for the working hotbed, exhausting it precociously while giving to society infirm workers and wearied mothers lacking elementary education".[28] The argument that had been used so far by the inspectors in order not to remove children from industry was that it was better for children

---

labour legislation and conditions of work in 1933, Athens 1935], p. 20.

[24] In a letter to Albert Thomas in 17 September 1928 who was the director of the International Labour Office, the prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos attributed the reluctance of his government to implement social reforms with the following argument: "(...) The necessity to safeguard employment for the mass of refugees, the small proportion of male adults among them, and, finally, the necessity of all the available economic resources to be devoted in their rehabilitation did not allow the application of the measures which could be useful but would clog the development of new industries, frequently unstable, and stop the development of others". Quoted in Antonis Liakos, *Ergasia kai politiki...*, p. 312

[25] "The defense of the rights of workers", *Eleftheron Vima*, 10 Jan. 1928, p. 5.

[26] *Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Ektheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon kai ton sinthikon ergasias en Elladi kata to etos 1931*, Athens 1934 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation and the conditions of labour in Greece in 1931, Athens 1934], p. 16

[27] Ibid., p. 19.

to work rather than wander in the streets and be exposed to moral and physical danger. It is not surprising that the opposite argument was used in this report if one considers that a double language as well as different standards concerning the labour of children and women were employed according to the needs of the industry or when situations of crisis occurred. The international economic crisis had affected Greece and according to the report in 1933 unemployment had reached its peak in the winter 1932-33. Thus, the removal of children from factories was implemented as a remedy for adult male unemployment and as a remedy to the economic crisis in industry.

On the other hand since 1921 the inspectors had recognized the need to bring servant employment under the auspices of child labour legislation since the number of juveniles working as servants was substantial and they often worked more than ten hours a day. As late as 1946, at the First Conference of Women Maria Svolou maintained that there was a great number of juveniles between 8 and 10 years of age who worked as servants. Legislation on children's and women's labour had not been extended to domestic service. In the presentation of the associations of Ipeiros at the same conference, it was stated that there were 200 domestic servants in Ioannina the majority of whom were juveniles, while in Arta there were 84 women working as servants above 14 years-old and 30 between 7-14 years-old. There was no union, social insurance, specialization or schools.[29] The measures proposed at the conference by Maria Svolou show exactly what had not been done:

> It is necessary to vindicate for: a) The extension of labour legislation to domestic servants and to enforce the minimum age of entering the profession; the implementation of the eight-hour day and the regulation of daily, weekly, monthly and annual full pay leave; the regulation of the sanitary conditions of the workplace and of the place of rest; the setting of a minimum wage according to the price index and specialization; b) the implementation of both general and vocational education of servants who are illiterate and who are less effective and more easily tired due to the lack of education; the establishment of schools for those who work and are illiterate schools while schooling ought to be compulsory without reduction to their payment. c) the enforcement of the social insurance provisions; d) the establishment of settlements where servants can stay in periods of unemployment when they do not have a family in the

---

[28] Ibid., p. 16.

[29] Talk of the representative of the Association of Ipeiros, First Panhellenic Conference of Women May 1946

place they work. At this later point women's associations should develop their activity.[30]

B. Women's Work: A World Coming to the Surface

The aim of the 1927-28 inspections was to enforce safety measures for the employees, hygienic conditions and cleanliness in workshops, and investigate the implementation of the provisions on working hours, control of the age of working women and children, and the causes of working accidents. However, the problem of unsanitary, dirty and dark workrooms continued and intensified in the late 1920s and in the beginnings of 1930s as the number of workshops multiplied. Most of these workshops were established in the centre of Athens in order to be close to commercial routes. The majority of basements in the centre were occupied by workshops where women worked for at least ten hours a day and for a very low wage. Inspectors pointed out that there were two solutions: either to abolish these buildings or to suggest a series of measures concerning the spatial arrangements. In avoiding the prosecution of employers, inspectors tried to persuade them to improve sanitary conditions and set a time by which the work should be done. For those whom there was no possibility of improvement a deadline was set for being abandoned. Yet, industry's benefit and the economic difficulties of small entrepreneurs was the primary consideration of inspectors. It was made clear that any measure that would obstruct the welfare of small enterprises should be avoided in periods of intense economic competition and crisis.

The flexibility of the implementation of provisions for women's protection was also dictated by economic calculation. Gender was used by employers, the state and unions to safeguard certain interests and to manipulate the regulation of the labour market in periods of unemployment. As Carole Pateman argued, modern patriarchy is not about paternal power but fraternity, men constituting a community. The workplace and trade unions are organized as fraternal territories.[31] Women's and children's participation in the workforce was a field of contest and of contradictory interpretations. Women were concentrated in unskilled jobs but even when they were occupied in skilled jobs they were still termed as unskilled. "Skill has traditionally been associated with masculine virtues".[32] Woman's tasks were deemed as inferior because they were done by women. The sexual organization of labour was an effect of

---

(President Avra Theodoropoulou, Secretary Roza Imvrioti) Archive of Roza Imvrioti, p. 3

[30] "On the economic and social conditions of Greek women", ibid., Archive of Roza Imvrioti, p. 8.

[31] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988, p. 140-1.

[32] Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*, p. 156.

social hierarchy.[33] In the investigation of 354 workshops in 1931, it was found that out of 3,543 women 48% of women earned between 5-20 drachmas per day, 36% earned between 20-40 and 16% earned between 41-79.[34] These workshops functioned either 6-8 months each year, or 4-5 months a year.[35] These were workshops where women's and men's dresses, hats, women's linen, men's shirts, umbrellas, fur, leather, boxes, toys, woolen goods were produced. However, in circumstances in which unemployment imperiled the male workers' position, as in the tobacco industry, women were excluded by law in 1933 from a stage of processing of tobacco [toga]. The removal of women, inspectors argued, was beneficial for working-class families as men stayed at home doing the household chores while their wives and daughters worked.[36]

The enforcement of labour legislation or the flexibility of its implementation was done on the grounds of serving the interest of certain industries. For example, the hours women were allowed to work in factories which processed raisins, as a large number of workers worked from midnight until the morning. When police intervened and prosecuted employers and magistrates convicted those who violated the law, inspectors stated that a different solution had to be found for the problem of overtime and night work in order not to cause damage to this vital sector of the Greek economy industry.[37]

Overtime proved difficult to control, especially in workshops. The inspectors could be easily deceived in workshops because the employers could pretend that the working day started later as there was no schedule which officially set working hours. A typical device of employers for exploiting workers' time was to set the watch half an hour earlier, although, as oral testimonies show, this was practiced by workers also in small workshops. Furthermore, many industries gained exceptions from the eight-hour day and in many of these cases workers were not paid for the extra hours. However, in the cases in which the law was violated, it was usually a result of consent between workers and employers. Considering the low wages female workers earned, it was the only way to boost their wage packet.[38] In the same distressing way, women threatened employers that they would abandon their work if they conceded to the law for child labour and did not allow their daughters to work.

---

[33] Maurice Godelier, "Work and its Representation", *History Workshop Journal*, no. 10, 1980, p. .
[34] Reports and proceedings in 1931, p. 51.
[35] Ibid., p. 50.
[36], p. 24.
[37] Reports and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of factory laws and the conditions of work in Greece in 1931, Athens 1934, p. 16.
[38] Summary of the reports of the body for the implementation of Labour Legislation 1927-8, Athens 1930, p. 27.

Moving between factories and from one type of work to another was a practice of female workers aimed at improving their wages. Between 1926 and 1928, there was a great demand for female employment and an expansion in the spinning, cotton and woolen industries as well as in the tobacco industry, which employed a large number of female workers. The constant movement of female workers (and especially refugees) was observed in cotton and woolen industries. Similarly, in the season of tobacco-processing hundreds of female workers moved to the tobacco industry because the wages were higher.[39] Furthermore, seasonal unemployment due to the closure of workshops for several months as we have seen above, led women to move from one type of work to another. Female workers were castigated for this attitude and it was a point where moral discourse intersected with professionalism. A large number of women needed to gain an independent subsistence, however the wages were inadequate and seasonal unemployment imperiled further their situation.

The gender segregation in employment in industry and the need for cheap labour led inspectors to perceive female employment as not irreconcilable with womanhood. On the contrary, women were accused of lacking professional consciousness and for perceiving their work as instrumental and as a temporal phase before marriage. Anapliotis, the director of the commission for the implementation of labour legislation, stated that women should perceive their work as a life-long occupation in order to supplement the family income and convert the working-class family into a working family unit. The attitude of women towards work as "slavery" and as "a necessity" was considered by inspectors as deriving from and being part of the mentality of working-class people who lacked education and what was called "social education" that would enable them to make long-term plans for their lives and their careers.[40] This was a recurring motto and it is telling that the consumption patterns of unmarried working class women, in particular, were used to reinforce the argument of their "professional and mental underdevelopment". It was, as Michel de Certeau put it, an age-old violence that oscillates between voyeurism and pedagogy.

> Unmarried female workers show an inclination to vain smartening. They spend the biggest part of their wages on clothes; they have a frugal diet because they are more interested in their appearance than in caring for a healthy diet. These inclinations contribute to the physical weakening of these classes and to the

---

[39] ibid., p. 28.
[40] Ibid.

instability of their aspirations.[41]

Yet, when inspectors suggested the establishment of restaurants in factories in order to encourage workers to eat decently, many workers did not eat there because there felt embarrassed to lay their poor lunch in front of other workers.[42] It was pointed out that where the majority of workers were women the introduction of food allowance did not succeed, because they were paid less than men and could not afford to pay five drachmas for lunch.[43] For example, when Eleftheria worked after the war in a hosiery workshop, she hid in the toilets during the break because she had no food to eat: "My mother's poverty was such that when everybody had elevens I went to the toilet waiting for the girls to eat because I did not have any food and I was waiting for my mother to knock the window at midday and bring me a piece of bread". In 1933 the establishment of a canteen in factories failed as workers preferred to eat the leftovers from home or eat bread and salted preserves.[44] Evaggelia worked two shifts as a stitching worker and preferred to cook after midnight preparing for her and her husband food for the factory which was put in a taper (*kastania*).

The interviewees who came from refugee families exchanged factory work with domestic service. Many workshops and industries were located in the refugee neighbourhoods or in the outskirts and recruited workers mainly from these neighbourhoods. This concentration of workshops and factories in the refugee settlements enabled the spread of information about jobs while the established solidarity networks facilitated the search for work. Word of the mouth played a crucial role in finding employment. The interviews provide some indications for the age and the patterns of female employment. None of the interviewees finished primary school and the majority left school after the second grade. Aggelina worked at the age of eight in a small workshop sticking labels on bottles of lemonade and at 11 she worked in a paper bag workshop. Evaggelia worked in a woolen factory when she was 13. Her task was to scrub the factory and cut threads. Eleftheria worked after the war in a hosiery manufacture as an unskilled worker and later in a knit underwear factory on the stitching machines. Later on, she worked as a skilled worker in glove making. Similar to the majority of the interviewees, she took work at home after the factory.

---

[41] Ibid.

[42] *Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Ektheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon kai ton sinthikon ergasias en Elladi kata to 1932*, Athens 1935 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation and conditions of work in 1932, Athens 1935], pp. 10-11.

[43] Ibid., p. 35.

[44] Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation and

Therefore, although girls between the age of 14-18 were limited working ten hours a day, Aggelina worked two shifts (from six o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock in the evening) in a woolen factory when she was fifteen years old while Eleftheria and Evaggelia took work home after the factory. Vania worked all night in a workshop in which they made glass for paraffin lamps. Eleftheria had insurance only in the glove workshop. In the other places of work and as far as the interviewees are concerned, when the inspectors of the Institute of Social Insurance (IKA) controlled the factories, the employees left by the back door and were sometimes hidden under the bench. On one occasion, Aggelina cut her finger as she was cleaning the factory from the nap while the machines were on, and her father received 15,000 drachmas in order not to prosecute the owner.

Although women were perceived as a category in need of protection, the proportion of female workers with social insurance benefits was much lower than that of men. In 1940, a statistical investigation conducted by the IKA (Institution of Social Insurance) in six towns revealed that out of 325,853 blue- and white-collar employees who were under the social insurance system only 84,030 were women, that is, 25% of the total number insured.[45]

Female workers became the object of public inquiry and the focus of the hygienic and moralizing public policy. It was not only that women were at the center of public interest. A gendered perspective permeated inspector's reports and there was a certain elaboration of this gendered discourse which made women the symbols of the dangerousness of the working-class population. Although the inspectors condemned the habits of working class fathers for spending their day and earnings on alcohol instead of giving their wage packets to their wives, it was the unmarried working class girls who attracted their gaze and strongest disapproval. Furthermore, the factory was a place where working-class women were looked upon as dangerous in their collectivity. Both male and female inspectors found the attitude of these girls disturbing, their language, appearance, and consumption habits, as well as their attitudes to work threatening. In the section of the 1921 report which dealt with the economic and moral status of the working classes, it concluded was that "the morals of the working-class female especially in industries in which they have contact with their male fellows follow unfortunately the already elsewhere observed immorality, intensified due to the economic circumstances created by the war".[46] The attitudes of female workers were perceived as an expression of defiance and were read as an alien and hidden culture which came to surface. It

---

conditions of work in 1933, Athens 1935, p. 21.

[45] Maria Svolou, "On the economic and social...", p. 1.

called for a huge campaign for the moralization of working-class females.

C. Definitions

The 1912 Act On the Payment of the Wages of Workers and of the Salaries of Servants and Clerks defined the worker as "every worker or craftsman, of both sexes and any age, who works for a daily, weekly or monthly salary, producing commodities for the market for a chief, director or owner of industry or workshop, inside or outside it or to every profit enterprise, the non-contractors, head artisans or workers, the mine workers, stone-pit workers, sellers or distributors of industrial products, the workers of wood-cutting and every craftsman offering his personal labour for a salary". The same definition is repeated in the 1920 Act On Codification in One and Unified Text of the Laws On the Payment of the Wages of Workers and of the Salaries of Servants and Clerks.

III. Legislative Provisions for Domestic Service

Protective legislation was a necessity imposed by the internationalization of labour politics which was a counteract to the threat of socialist movements. The inconsistency and ambivalence of its implementation, which was allocated to the inspectors, was the outcome of the primary consideration of the economic and industrial development. The reports on women's work in the factories and workshops show the attempts of labour legislation to control the working-class population and regulate the labour market according to the needs of industries.

Domestic service was profoundly omitted from labour legislation, although the inspectors acknowledged that the working conditions and age of domestic servants violated the provisions of children's and women's labour, labour legislation as well as social insurance. In 1921, for the first time, service employment became an issue of official concern for the labour legislation inspectors and it was considered as a category of employment which should be under the auspices of the children's and women's labour legislation due to the hard conditions and exploitation to which servants were subjected. Information about the exploitation and the deplorable situation of servants acquired validity and credibility through the statement of Anapliotis, director of the body of inspectors, who stressed that it was a result of his individual observations as well as of his staff. He referred exclusively to female servants. But let's give his words first hand:

---

[46] Reports of the body of inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation in 1921, p. 16.

> I have to note, in passing, that my individual observations as well as those of the staff led me to the certainty that in many cases juvenile female servants are liable to mistreatment by many masters and work a lot more hours than ten. I believe that legislative action has to be undertaken for these unfortunate creatures who come from small town far from Athens and far from their parents and unprotected become a prey of inhuman and ultimate exploitation. The law has to protect them by a specific provision. [47]

Although the tone was dramatic and determined, the issue of bringing servant employment under the labour legislation was completely forgotten afterwards. Instead, domestic service was dealt with officially by the police and the regulation of service employment was undertaken by police provisions. The Police Headquarters of Athens issued the regulations and were held responsible for their implementation.[48] These measures were aimed at policing a stratum of the working-class population which intermingled with the middle classes, a working-class population that was constituted as a threat to society. Furthermore, there were various state and private institutions, which launched claims to the control of servants and tried to regulate the service labour market and to secure the flow of servants in middle-class households. The social policy on domestic service aimed above all at safeguarding the security and needs of middle-class employers.

From the late nineteenth century until after the Second World War service employment was regulated by several police provisions. These provisions represented the anxiety of the middle class regarding the moral and material threat that servants represented for the family. From 1870 to 1946 the Police Headquarters of Athens and Piraeus issued seven provisions that were concerned with servants and servant agencies.[49]

Under the 1870 provision, everyone who wanted to exercise the servant's or wet-nurse's trade had to present himself or herself before the police with a reference certificate from a legally recognized servant registry and to be provided with a booklet in order to get

---

[47] Ibid.

[48] Under the 126 Act in 13 March 1849 On the Establishment of Administrative Police, the Municipal Police was substituted by the Police Headquarters of Athens and Piraeus. The Police Headquarters were entitled to issue police provisions ratified by the Minister of Interior while in the rest of Greece in 1910 with the 3577 Act the mayors were not entitled anymore to issue police provisions but were substituted by the police. The provisions were ratified by the Minister of Interior.

[49] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, Police Headquarters of Athens, *Peri Ipireton, trofon kai ipiretomesiton* [On servants, wet nurses and servant agents], no. 39, 25 Nov. 1870; Ibid., *Peri Ipireton, trofon kai ipiretomesiton* [On servants and servant agents] no. 121, 12 Nov. 1879; Ibid., *Peri ipiretomesiton, ipiretomesitrion, ipireton, ipiretrion kai trofon* [On servant agents, servants and wet nurses], no. 1905; Ibid., *Peri ipireton kai ipiretrion* [On servants] no. 34, 12 May 1918. Ibid., *Peri tropopoiiseos tis ip. ar. 4/24 tou 1918 astinomikis diatakseos peri ipireton kai ipiretrion* [Amendment of the 1918 no. 4/24 police provision on servants], no. 9, 4 February 1919; Ibid., *Peri Ipoxreoseon ipireton, ipiretoumenon kai ipiretomesiton* [On the obligations of servants, employers and servant agents], no. 147, 6 August 1937.

license from the police. Servant registries had to received a license from the police and to keep books in a form which was defined by the police. Furthermore, they had to send a copy of their weekly proceedings every Monday to the police. The registry office was held equally responsible for actions of the servant or wet-nurse. The recruitment or substitution of servant or wet-nurse has to be implemented through the servant agencies. In addition, after the termination of employment, agencies were obliged to gather information from the master or mistress regarding the conduct of the servants during their service and to register this information in the booklet. A maximum period a servant could remain unemployed was one week. In of resignation or dismissal, the servant had to be presented to the agency to report the situation. In particular, female servants had to reside during the period of unemployment in houses of relatives (presenting proof) or in the house of the agent. If a female servant was seen once or twice the maximum in a brothel or had any relationship with prostitutes or procuresses, she would be expelled from the service trade. If she was registered in a different municipality than in the one she worked as a servant or if she was an alien, she was sent back to her place of origin or else she was registered as a prostitute.

The 1905 provision allocates to the register office the responsibility to "collect all the necessary information in order for the master to acquire true apprehension of the morals, duties, honesty, health, and skill of the employing person which has to communicate to the employer. Besides register offices were held responsible for the good positioning of the servant that is, to position the person to honest families and not destitute that should be able to pay the agreed salary". It ordered the registry offices to have a written license from the tax inspector which had to be presented to the police station of their district. Furthermore, agents were required to register the name of the employer in the books they kept, which had to be numbered and signed by the police. In cases of unemployment, it was recommended the female servant should not reside with the register office (although not stated) but with the Asylum of St Caterina or in a "honest" family of relatives or friends. The provision made a distinction between servants in enterprises and houses. Those employed in enterprises should register with the police rolls and present the card to the employer, as done by the rest of the workers. Domestic servants had to register at the police station and get a card signed and stamped by the policeman of the nearby police station that certified the identity and conduct of the servant. Already this distinction constructs domestic service as a different form of employment.

Until 1918 servant agencies were the mediators between servant and employer and responsible not only for the supply of servants but also for their behaviour and for the

gathering information from employers concerning the servants. It was their responsibility to provide employers with healthy, honest, moral and skilled servants. In addition, servants were obliged to register at a servant agent office that was recognized by the police.

However, from 1918 onwards, servant agents were passed over by the police and were prohibited to mediate in the employment of juveniles.[50] Instead, philanthropic institutions "were welcomed" to act as mediators and suppliers of servants. In 1918, employers were obliged to write on the servants' cards information about their behaviour and character. This was forbidden under the 1912 Act On Children's and Women's Labour which prohibited any notes about the conduct or competence of workers on the booklets apart from the dates of employment and its termination. Under the provision, it was no longer the police station of the district in which the servant registered, but the Police Headquarters that were ordered to keep books of all the male and female (domestic) servants of the city of Athens. In these books, the identity, origin, nationality, age and the employers name and address as well as information about their moral conduct had to be registered. According to the articles 2 and 3, every person who sought employment as a servant was obliged to get a card from the Police Headquarters and, in order to get it, he/she had to submit an application to the Police Headquarters. After checking the information provided in the application, the police provided the card "only to those who have been judged as honest and of good conduct. For those who have just arrived in Athens, police should require from the police authorities in charge to provide a certificate of their identity and conduct". The 1918 provision abolished all the previous police provisions which contravened it. However, in 25 January 1919, articles 2 and 3 of the 1918 provision were abolished on the condition that employers submit an application by which they certified the name, origin, age of the employed servant, their conduct and period of employment.[51]

The 1937 provision treated even more explicitly servants as potential criminals. It ordered the specific details of the servants' booklet: specific colour (black for males and blue for females), and dimensions (0.11x16). Apart from the photo of its owner, it included on a separate page the servant's fingerprints (ten fingers!) as well as his or her signature. Six pages of the booklet were to be completed with the "complaints for offences committed by servants such as theft etc. by the police". Moreover, the General Police not only continued to keep a book of servants but also a personal file of each male or female servant. Employers were ordered to keep the booklet of the servant from the commencement of employment and were

---

[50] The 5288 Act (article 14) On the Regulation of the Labour Market prohibited the Register Offices for male and female servants.

required to return it at the termination of the contract after having filled in the duration of employment. In case servants disappeared, employers had to return the booklet to the police within 48 hours. According to article 1 of the provision, servants under fourteen-years old had to have the consent of their father or guardian in order to be provided with a booklet. At the moment of entering or leaving their post servants had to submit a declaration to the General Police and to present their booklet for attestation.

Twenty-five years after the Act on Children's and Women's labour and in spite of the campaign on the exploitation of juvenile domestic servants, domestic service remained under the police provisions without any attempt to set a minimum age for working. The provision became stricter than the previous concerning the license given to servant agents. Those who had been convicted for certain offences did not receive a license while the license was withheld from those who had been convicted during exercising their profession. Agents had to get a license from the police after they had received authorization from the Ministry of Labour and had submitted a certificate of their penal record.

The first attempt to extend the prohibition of child labour to domestic service and to bring domestic service under the labour legislation was during the Metaxas dictatorship. Article 2 of the 759/1937 Emergency Act On the Protection of Certain Professions and Amendment of Certain Articles of Labour Laws "prohibited the use of domestic servants who have not completed the fourteenth year of age and who do not possess a health booklet. The provision of health booklets is handled by the inspector of labour and counter-signed by the police authority or by the local police authorities, according to the article seven of the 199/1936 Emergency Act On the Amendment of Some Labour Laws".[52] The 1937 Act and also the preamble introduced two measures: a) it prohibited children under fourteen-years old to work as domestic servants and b) those who worked as domestic servants should obtain a health booklet. The Deputy Minister of Labour A. Dimitratos argued that:

> The bill undertakes concern for the provision of domestic servants with a health booklet. These measures are necessary because there has been no protective legislation for the profession of domestic servant. As for the prohibition for persons under fourteen years old to work as domestic servants

---

[51] "Amendment of 4/24 1918 police provision on male and female servants", 4 Feb. 1919.

[52] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos, Peri prostasias epaggelmaton tinon kai tropopoiiseos diatakseon tinon ergatikon tinon nomon* [On the Protection of Certain Professions and Amendment of Certain Articles of Labour Laws], vol. 1, no. 256, 6 July 1937. According to the article 7 of the 199 Emergency Act in 1936, "The labour booklets of juveniles will be hence provided by the Inspectors of Labour on the basis of a certificate supplied by a doctor employed in the civil service or in municipal authorities", *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, no. 440, 6 October 1936.

and their provision with health booklets, we have the opinion that it satisfies not only those who work as domestic servants but also the common sentiment [of justice] which observes the current situation with discomfort, that is, children six and seven years old [employed] in houses of large families.[53]

According to the deputy minister the law was conceived as a response to the common sentiment of justice, which prevented the employment of children as domestic servants. This form of child labour (which until then had remained profoundly outside child labour legislation), as we shall see, provoked fierce reaction from different groups in society. The emotional value of children and the loss of their economic value had been firmly established during the late 1930s. However, not all children were entitled to childhood. Against the preamble and the spirit of the law exemplified by the deputy minister, the Supreme Court, gave a very "narrow" interpretation of article 2 and judged that the health booklet was compulsory only for those under fourteen years of age dismissing both the prohibition of labour under 14 years of age but also the provision of a health booklet for those above fourteen-years old.[54] This interpretation illustrates not only that middle-class families were entitled to be supplied with children, but also that the phenomenon of employing children as servants was very diffused. The Supreme Court mediated straightforwardly to safeguard employers' interests and needs. Children were cheaper labour than adult female servants as the interviews show. Furthermore, domestic service for the urban population, in particular, was a less attractive form of employment than factory work, thus, child labour was a solution to the "servant problem" and the scarcity of domestic labour. Furthermore, children were found to be docile and easier to exploit than adults.

In the nineteenth century, the provisions aimed at the regulation of the supply of servants and at the creation of a stable servant market under the control of servant agencies. Domestic servants were not allowed to remain unemployed for more than a week, while agents were responsible for placing them in a house. The expansion of the middle class in the late nineteenth century demanded a constant flow of servants while the growth of the urban labour classes, the ubiquity of rural migrants in the city and the fear of delinquency created unease in the middle classes and the state employees. Thus, the 1870 and 1879 provisions were an attempt to correct the "anomaly" and "disorder" which characterized the "orders" of servants and to restrict the instability that arose from the tendency of servants to change

---

[53] A. Dimitratos, "The protection of certain professions", *Ergatiki Ellas*, year 1, no 5, July 1937, p. 134.

[54] Danai and Nikos Kouhtsoglou, "To dikaio tis ipiretrias" [The Servant's Law], *Engiklopaideia tis Ginaikas*

positions without giving notice. The model for this legislative provision was the Parisian provisions of 1853. The Parisian police issued a booklet for servants while employers were not allowed to employ a servant without this booklet. In addition, the law also contained the penalty of imprisonment for servants who did not have a booklet (ranging from eight days to three months) and those who did not present themselves at police stations to declare their removal from employers' houses (from twenty four hours up to four days).[55]

In the early twentieth century the link between criminality and domestic service was firmly established in public discourse. Policing the servant population was the primary aim of the provisions, all of which were introduced and legitimized by the need to repress servants' criminal activities. In 1905, it was held that "the provisions responded to the anxiety of society due to the illegal actions and misbehaviour of servants, servant agents and wet nurses and aimed at protecting the interests of society".[56] In 1918, the police provision was much clearer in stating the causes of unease and disturbance that the servant population represented. "We, the Police Director of Attica and Boetia and Police General Apostolos Papapoikonomou, have been repeatedly assured that servants, taking advantage of their position in various houses of the city, committed theft against their employers or smoothed other people's paths to commit it. For this reason, we consider it necessary that police vigilance be stricter (...) and we order the following regulations concerning domestic servants".[57] In 1937, the regulations aimed at "preventing offences of every kind committed by people entering households under the pretence of service and at preventing people intending to work as servants from being exploited by suspicious people".[58]

There were two main issues that the provisions dealt with and which had preoccupied society: prostitution and theft. The provisions took account only of illegal actions on the part of servants while the state, by refusing to restrict the age of entering service employment and working hours and by closing off all the questions of exploitation and mistreatment defined servants as part of the dangerous classes and criminalized them.

One of the most important attempts to regulate service employment came from the philanthropic activity of middle-class women at the end of the nineteenth century. The establishment of the Asylum of St Caterina in 1893 constituted the forerunner to legislation on

---

[Encyclopedia of Women], Athens 1967, p. 360.

[55] "Ipiretiki viomichania" ["Service industry"], *Oikonomiki Epitheorisis*, no. 37, March 1876, p. 16.

[56] "On servant agents, domestic servants and wet nurses", 9 July 1905.

[57] "On male and female domestic servants", 5 May 1918.

[58] "On the obligations of domestic servants, employers and servant agents", 19 January 1937.

domestic service and set the foundations for controlling the servant population and the servant market. Kalliroi Parren (1861-1940) was one of pioneers of the early feminist movement who held a prominent role in the organization of philanthropic activities. The Secretary General of the Patriotic Alliance of Greek Women and the Asylum of St Caterina, were among the posts which she held in the administrative councils of institutions, and she participated actively in the attempts to create a territory for female activity.[59] In 1887 she edited the *Efimeris ton Kirion* (1887-1919) campaigning for the education of women and for the right of women to work. Kaliroi Paren was a representative of Greece in the conference of women in Chicago in 1896. In 1911 she established the *Likeion Ellinidon* [Lyceum of Greek Women] and in 1922 the Housekeeping and Vocational School of Women was set up with Kalliopi Kehagia.

The Asylum of St Caterina was established as a philanthropic association. The President of the association was K. Vroski and the Secretary was Kalliroi Parren. The establishment of the Asylum of St Caterina aimed at "establishing and maintaining an asylum for female workers and *particularly* female domestic servants".[60] The memorandum of the association illustrates that the Asylum aimed at functioning as a servant registry office: "A servant cannot stay in the Asylum for more than a fortnight, unless during this period she or the ladies of the Asylum have not found an appropriate position" (article 3, Part VI). Besides the 1905 and 1918 police regulations recognized its role as both a refuge and as an agency (by allocating the recruitment of juvenile domestic servants exclusively to philanthropic institutions) and gave prevalence to the asylum over the existing servant register offices showing that the Asylum succeeded at establishing itself as a register office. The similarities between the provisions of 1870 police statute and the regulations of the asylum are striking as well as between the functions of registry offices set up by the police and those of the asylum. At the same time, police regulations in the twentieth century reproduced the regulations set by the Asylum. According to article 5, Part V the director had to provide every servant placed by the members of the Asylum with a booklet of service which contained the stamp of the Asylum and the signature of the director. The booklet registered the name, age, and origin of the employing servant, the employer's name, the type of service offered and the monthly salary the servant received. The booklet was given to the mistress and the mistress returned it to the Asylum the day of servant's departure. The mistress had to register in the booklet the

---

[59] For an analysis of the early feminist movement, see Eleni Varikas, *I gennisi mias feministikis sineidisis stin Ellada 1833-1907*, Idrima Erevnas kai Paideias tis Emporikis Trapezas tis Ellados, Athens 1987.

[60] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos, Katastatikon Asylou Agias Aikaterinis* [Memorandum of the Asylum of St Caterina, vol. 1, no. 65, 8 April 1893, pp. 310-12. [my emphasis].

reasons for the servant's departure or expulsion, the servant's conduct and the quality of services offered during her service. The Director was responsible for registering these notices in the Asylum's rolls. The Asylum kept a book in which the names of servants and work addresses were registered and the Director had to visit the mistress once a month or every two months and inquire about the person and the conduct of the servant recommended by the Asylum. The Asylum established an alliance with mistresses and relied on their cooperation for the production of a certain kind of servant: honest, skilled and stable.

According to the memorandum, "The aim of the Asylum is the provision of moral protection and shelter to female domestic servants and workers who are unemployed and are far away from their parents and relatives. The protection and shelter consists of: a) provision of shelter and food to unemployed servants. b) The ladies of the Committee should position them in an honest and appropriate post and to offer moral support, which the ladies should provide to every servant whose inexperience and weakness are exploited by her masters. c) Judicial support of the material interests of servants against employers who deprive her of the wages. d) The provision of elementary education as well as religious and moral education in the Sundays Schools of Athens e) The provision of hospitalization and medicine either in the Asylum or in the hospital to servants who have a certificate of thanks by their employers for whom they worked for at least two following years. [...]".

The moralization and control of the servant population was one of the main aims of the asylum along with its function as an agent. The provision of shelter and employment was addressed to internal migrants who formed the majority of servants working in Athens. The asylum aimed at substituting registry offices by bringing the recruitment of domestic servants under its strict control and also at safeguarding a moral, honest, healthy and skilled workforce. The Director was obliged not accept any servant who looks "of suspicious health" but instead had to send her to the President and could be accepted after a medical examination proved her to be healthy. Several measures were introduced in order to succeed at producing stable and moral servants. The condition for providing hospitalization and medicine was the written expression of satisfaction of the employers, as long as this was accompanied by at least two-year service in the same house. Servants were judged as deserving medical care by their conduct, skill and stability of employment. All provisions even that of food and shelter depended on the servants' conduct and most of them were given as awards for stability and good behaviour. Although the Asylum did not have any connection with church institutions, the choice of naming it after a female saint lent a moral splendour and a religious aura, distinguishing it from other secular institutions and signalling its reformatory character. Each

year on the feast day of the Saint, servants and workers attended mass and received medals and praise. Each year, a silver medal bearing the stamp of the Asylum was given to the "honest and conscious-minded servant for a year's service in the same family" (Part II, article 1). Every three years, 100 drachmas were given to the servant who stayed for three consecutive years with the same family and during this period she was judged as deserving of the yearly-awarded medals. A diploma of honour was given to the servant who served the same family for ten years or a present decided by the Committee on the occasion of her marriage. Finally, the provision was made for a pension to be given to the servant who served the same family for twenty years as well as protection and support for life by the Asylum's committee (article 1, Part II).

The awards were given as a reward for servants' commitment and stability. The longer they stayed with the same family, the more praise they received. The stability of servants was the most important value and objective of the Asylum. Moralization and bringing the servant population under the control of middle-class women was the second major task of the Asylum. It was strictly forbidden for any man, relative or friend, to enter the Asylum and visit servants, a rule similar to the restriction of contact imposed by employers. In addition, the Asylum received only "masters of families" who came to the Asylum to recruit a servant, and the Director "never hands a servant to a master, whoever he is, without notifying the President or the other ladies of the Committee. Furthermore, the Director did not give a servant to old women [*graidia*] or women of unknown origin without visiting the family before and reassuring that it is honest and reliable" (article 8, Part V).

Paternalism purveyed the relationship between the Director and servants. The Director, who supervised the conduct and attitude of servants, advised and admonished servants as though they were her own daughters. "Any suspicion about the morals and conduct of servants is reported to the Ladies of the Committee who decide together with the President for the expulsion of a woman of suspicious morals". Servants who stayed in the Asylum were not allowed to leave the asylum after five o'clock in the afternoon in the winter or seven o'clock in the evening during the summer. Domestic servants had to pay 0,75 drachmas for each day they resided in the Asylum. For the servant who entered the Asylum for the first time, the Director made an arrangement with the family with whom she was recruited to deduct the money from her first salary and gave it to the Asylum (article 2, Part VI). This arrangement between the employer and the Asylum is a further illustration of the paternalism that governed the relationship of the Asylum towards servants. Servants were under the surveillance of the Director whom they had to obey. Love and protection was

offered to the servant who visited the Director at least once a month on a Sunday afternoon and consulted her for every decision and in particular a decision to leave the house in which she had been placed by the ladies. "The servant who wishes to be loved and protected by the ladies and to deserve the prizes and presents from them ought to be decent in her behaviour and clothes, modest and humble" (article 4, part VI).

The Asylum's memorandum is an illustration of the model of the mistress-servant relationship that middle-class women imagined and aspired to establish. The model of this relationship was the family. The ladies aspired that the Asylum would function according to the rules and hierarchies that governed the family and as an initiation to the rules, conditions and form of relationships in domestic service. Its structure, conditions, and rules aimed at preparing the servant to enter domestic service and at instilling the values and principles that should purvey domestic service. Thus the Asylum tried to replicate domestic service institution as it was desired and imagined by middle-class women: governed by familial bonds, discipline, obedience, affection and protection. As Deborah Valenze argues, "as paternalism receded from the economic arena, hierarchy and deference were re-inscribed within relationships between classes".[61] Catherine Gallagher talks about two ideological developments in nineteenth century: the popular revival of social and economic paternalism and the idealization of domesticity.[62] "Family and society are not identical but family is the best model on which to reorganize society and make it organic once more. This notion is metaphoric, or analogical. Industrial relations should be modeled on the relationship between father and child".[63]

In the nineteenth century, the family signified cooperation, affectionate suasion and limited freedom. The Committee of the Asylum was called the "Ladies" suggesting an identification and similarity of roles between an employer and the member of the association. The similarities between the Asylum and the model of domestic service are also similarities between total institutions and domestic service. Some of the rules which applied to servants residing in the Asylum included the following:

1. Obedience to the Director and submission to her orders
2. Labour in the Asylum had to be performed silently while behaviour and appearance had to be decent.

---

[61] Deborah Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 142.
[62] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form 1832-1867*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 115.
[63] Ibid., p. 117.

3. Restrictions on entering and exiting the Asylum.
4. Awakening at 5 o'clock in the summer and at 6 in the winter.
5. Sunday afternoon as a day of meeting with the Director.
6. Control of visitors and receiving visitors on Sunday afternoon with the Director always present.
7. Surveillance by the Director of the servants' conduct and morals.

The education and professionalization of domestic service formed a central part of the philanthropic activities of middle-class women and it became a pivotal issue in the struggle for women's right to work by early feminists. In the next chapter, the attempts for the professionalization of domestic service in the inter-war period will be examined.

The 1912 and 1920 Acts On the Payment of the Wages of Workers and Servants that servants of both sexes could legally claim their wages with an affirmation by the bank or the savings bank concerning the deposit of their salary. In addition, in cases of more than three months delay of payment the Acts provided 5% interest a year.[64] The 1920 Act On the Extension of 2112 Act "On the notice of termination of labour contract of private clerks/employees" to workers, artisans and servants provided that private employees at home were covered by the Act. The notice of termination of the labour contract of domestic servants, porters, carters, stewards, cooks, gardeners, wet-nurses, nurses, in enterprises or institutions and of the work relationships of the same nature was set at eight days before the termination. For domestic teachers and pedagogues, the notice of termination was set at fifteen days. An employer who violated the law was required to pay the worker or servant an amount equal to the wages he would have earned for the period starting from the day that the notice had to be given. The employer could terminate the contract without notice if the worker or servant was prosecuted for a criminal act during his employment or if there was an indictment against him in general.[65]

The 6298 Act On Social Insurance was enforced under Metaxas dictatorship in 1937. The first Bill On Social Insurance was introduced by the Liberal government of Venizelos and passed on 11 October 1932 (Act 5733).[66] Under the Act, an insurance organization (IKA) was

---

[64] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, On the Payment of wages of workers and of the salaries of servants and clerks, Act 4030, article 4, 1 Feb. 1912, no. 36, p. 220. Ibid., 21 August 1920.
[65] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, no. 158, 18 July 1920.
[66] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, 5733 Social Security Act, no. 364, 11 October 1932.

established abolishing all the previous funds. Contributions were paid by workers and employers. According to the 1932 Act all persons who offered their labour or service for a salary were brought under the social insurance legislation including domestic servants (article 2). It provided two measures: health insurance and pension for disability, old age and death. Health insurance including maternity benefit and illness benefit (40% of the wage) was provided from the fourth day of illness and for a period of maximum 180 days. Besides, confinement benefit (40% of the wage) was provided for six weeks before as well as after confinement (article 37). Nursing benefit (20% of the wage) for 90 days after confinement (article 38). Confinement and nursing benefits were also provided for illegitimate children. As women's wages were very low, nursing and confinement benefits were inadequate for supporting themselves and their infants.[67]

When the Populist party came to power in November 1932, the Act was abolished and a new Bill was introduced and passed in 1935 (Act 6298) after bringing about alterations to the Venizelos' Act.[68] Among the alterations introduced was the reduction of the contributions of employers and employees, the reduction of illness benefit (it was given after the eighth day of illness instead of fourth), partial disability, and wet-nursing benefits as well as the exclusion of male and female domestic servants.

The 6298/1934 Act On Social Insurance excluded male and female domestic servants from the IKA. It was stated that: "The following categories are excluded from the social security scheme of this law: domestic servants [*oikositoi ipiretai*] on the grounds that they are not employed by an employer who has the form of enterprise". Nevertheless, it provided (article 3, paragraph 8) that domestic service could be brought under the social insurance legislation by decree. This distinction between employer and entrepreneur was used to exclude domestic servants from several laws. The preamble of the 1846/1951 Social Security Act stated that: "The following categories of persons are judged eligible for their inclusion in the social security: a) Domestic servants [*oikositoi ipiretai*]. The above category of persons was not included in social security under the 6298 Act because it was judged as being adequately protected by the families in which they were employed, being considered as members of the family according to the Greek traditions and customs. However, the above reason for their exclusion from social security is not anymore judged as adequate due to the change of current conditions according to which domestic servants confront the same needs

---

[67] Agni Rousopoulou-Stouditou, "Women and Social Security", *Ellinis*, 1933, no 5 [??], pp. 66-7.
[68] Efimeris tis Kiverniseos, 6298 Social Security Act, no 346, 10 October 1934.

for protection as the rest of wage-earners".[69] Yet, in the 1846 Act in 1951, domestic servants were not included in the Social Security scheme. Article 2 of the Act provided that the extension of social security to further categories of employment would be enforced by a royal decree. Nine years later, the 4104 decree in 1960 added in the article 2 of the 1846 Emergency Act of 1951: "Domestic waged help [*oikiakoi emmisthoi voithoi (oikositoi ipiretai)*] and all those employed in the house of the employer are brought under the social insurance (IKA)".[70] Regulation 7265/17-2-1961 of the Ministry of Labour defined the social insurance contribution: Domestic servants employed in towns of more than 40,000 inhabitants were brought under the social insurance of IKA. Those insured were entitled only to health and pension benefits and it was compulsory but not automatic. It started after notification of the contract in IKA. The employer was obliged to report to IKA the recruitment of the female servant within 15 days. The social insurance ended after employers notified IKA of the termination of the employment. Day workers who were employed 2-3 days to the house of the employer were not covered by the social insurance legislation as it provided for the weekly employment under the same employer. For that reason Artemis, who worked as a day domestic worker after the war, was insured as an industrial worker by her employers who had a hosiery industry.

Domestic servants were not entitled to unemployment benefit. The 539/1945 Act that introduced leave excluded domestic servants. Articles 666 and 667 of the Civil Code covered the categories of workers who were not until then covered by labour legislation. According to these articles, domestic servants were entitled to leave as follows: 10 days for those who worked from 1-5 years, 15 for those who worked for 5-15 years and 20 days for those who worked for more than 20 years. They also received their salary during the period of leave. The leave had to be requested by the servant, otherwise she was not entitled receive time off. Domestic service was not part of the collective labour bargaining, therefore, there was no minimum wage set. Remuneration was exclusively negotiated between employer and employee.

According to article 660 of the Civil Code employers were obliged to offer health care to the servant at home or in the hospital. This was set at one month if the servant had been employed for one year and at ten days if the duration of employment was three months.

---

[69] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, Preamble on the Bill On Social Security, no. 179, 21 June 1951.
[70] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, 4104 Legislative Decree, no. 147, 20 September 1960.

However, the cost of health care was deducted from the servant's salary.[71]

The Bill On Labour Accidents ratified the international treaty on labour accidents which had been approved by the International Conference of Labour in 1925 and the existing 24th July 1920 decree (On the codification of the laws on the obligation of labour accidents' benefit for workers and clerks) were adjusted in line with the principles of the treaty. The treaty left to the individual members of the League of Nations and to the local government the decision to enforce certain exclusions due to the disagreement on the application of the social security for labour accidents in certain professions. The Bill excluded "domestic labourers" and members of the family of the employer who work for him and resided in his house.[72] Domestic servants [*oikositoi iperetes*] were thus excluded from the insurance on labour accidents on the ground that they were not employed "under an employer who has the form of enterprise" although the law covered illnesses that were caused by labour such as pleurisy (368 Emergency Act, 1938), bronchopneumonia (9 Emergency Act, 1938), and appendicitis (12 Emergency Act 1922), from which domestic servants suffered due to exposure on cold and carrying heavy loads. Article 551 of the Civil Code provisioned insurance for labour accidents after a contract had been established for those professions that were not covered by the law for labour accidents.[73]

The 2000 Act On In Turn Labour excluded domestic service by establishing a distinction between the quality of employer from that of the entrepreneur or exploiter of the labour of person: "For example, the master who recruits a male or female servant for catering the needs of his house has the quality of employer because he employs a wage-earner, but he is not from this point of view an entrepreneur or an owner of exploitation because the house of which he is the master does not constitute an enterprise or exploitation".[74]

During Metaxas dictatorship attempts were made to bring some professions under labour legislation and social insurance from which they had been excluded so far. The collective labour contracts were established while the minimum wage was introduced in many sectors. In addition, the obligatory arbitration, which had been practiced by previous governments, was enforced by law under the Kondilis government (Emergency Act 16 November 1935). Jobs that were under the category of service such as retail shops (groceries

---

[71] Danai and Nikos Kouhtsoglou, "The Servant's Law", Encyclopedia of Women, 1967, pp. 360-362.
[72] Maria Svolou, "Labour bills", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 53, 15 Sept. 1927, p. 3.
[73] Tasos Tsimpoukis, *Ergatiki Ellas*, no. 79, 15 August 1940, p. 387.
[74] Georgios Trimis, "The concept of employer and the law of in turn labour", *Ergatiki Ellas*, year 4, no 84, 1 Nov 1940, p. 503.

etc.) which were staffed up to 90% by juvenile males were included in the collective labour bargaining agreement which was signed between groceries and private employees, while working hours were reduced from 11 and 1/2 to 10 by the Emergency Act 547.[75] The collective labour bargaining agreement was also signed between limited liability companies (Ltd) and cleaners. Before collective bargaining was introduced, the salary of cleaners was 400-500 drachmas and after the collective labour bargaining increased to 800 drachmas.[76] There were also attempts to regulate domestic service and to professionalize the employment of domestic servant. The Public Office for Employment was also designed to place domestic servants and in order to be placed, information had to be collected about the number of members of the employer's family, the number of children, of fellow domestic servants, the number of rooms and the quantity of labour required.[77]

---

[75] Ioannis Patsantzis, "The living and professional level of private employees is increased", *Ergatiki Ellas*, no 5, 15 July 1937, pp. 72-3. The article describes the working conditions of those "pariahs": "Their life was unbearable. The didn't have any rest, they didn't receive any wage, they ate only the rotten food that was left in the shop and they slept in dark and dirty lofts using as mattress sacks or sacks full of cod or on barrels full of sardines".

[76] The position of cleaners is improved", *Ergatiki Ellas*, no. 12, 1 Nov. 1937, p. 314. "For that reason [due to the increase of salaries and the sign of the collective bargaining] this poor class of female employees will be eternally grateful to the protector of male and female workers Mr Ioannis Metaxas".

[77] "The mission of offices for employment", *Ergatiki Ellas*, no. 11, 15 Oct. 1937, p. 295.

Chapter Three

Public Concern for Children: Servants in the Debate on Child Labour

This chapter attempts to describe the position of the servant in public discourse and more specifically in the debates on children's labour and child welfare. In the second decade of the twentieth century, when state labour policy began to be formulated, the child came at the centre of the stage and the family became the *topos* which provided an entrance into the regulation of both the working-class as well as the middle-class family by the state. Servants were perceived as a problem and domestic service became a point of intersection of various discourses and policies which aimed at policing the servant population and moralizing the family. Moreover, service labour was a point of the conflicting interests between the middle class and state agents.

The figure of the servant enabled contemporaries to exchange opinions about the effects of labour on children and the threat that poor children represented for the social order. Servants became a metaphor for the working class and a bridge between the state and the family. Moreover, the servant became a means to instill to middle-class women notions and habits of good housewifery. The portrayal of the servant as a potential thief and prostitute codified the dangerousness of the working class. On the other hand, servant labour became the symbol of the exploitation of children and created a frame for claims for the economic release of children. Therefore, my aim in this chapter is to trace the particular historical circumstances that placed servants as children in danger.

In late nineteenth-century Athens, children began to attract the attention of various groups of society. The "street child" emerged as a distinct category which encompassed vagabond children as well as bread carriers, shoe polishers and servants who, due to the nature of their work, spent long hours in the streets. The attempts to rescue and civilize these little "savages" were undertaken by doctors, magistrates, lawyers, pedagogues, journalists and writers.[1] Their efforts were crystallized in the establishment of a number of philanthropic institutions whose dual mission was to protect children in danger and society from dangerous children. It was through these voluntary efforts to restore children to order and through the discussions and representations of street children that the "social" emerged as a distinct field, a hybrid domain

---

[1] For the expansion and the role of philanthropic activity in Greece, see Maria Korasidou, *I Athlioi ton Athinon kai i therapefies tous*, [The miserable of Athens and their therapists], Athens, Istoriko Archeio Ellinikis

between the public and the private. The family became the location in which discussions of the social intersected and the place in which demands were launched for the improvement of the lower strata of society.[2]

At the turn of the century, and, in particular, from the second decade onwards, private initiative began to be replaced by state intervention. Housing conditions, hygiene, children's and women's labour created a realm for the extension of state functions and activities. The family was at the centre of the debates of social scientists and bureaucrats who worked in the state sector which carried out social policy. For these groups social policy justified their position and constituted a vehicle for social advancement.

After 1922, the city of Athens and the lives of refugees became a new terrain of intervention for private and state institutions and an enormous amount of human and material resources were mobilized to cope with a situation of crisis and calamity. Not only state institutions but private initiative regained legitimacy. Women were protagonists in this enterprise of economic, hygienic and moral reconstitution of the refugee population that had implications for the whole working-class population. They based their claims to these new territories on natural female endowments arguing that there were certain areas of social life especially those that concerned women and children and certain positions such as children's courts, female police body, the body of inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation, to name but a few, which had to be dealt by women because it was more concurrent with their nature.[3] The social, with particular regard to the family, emerged as a new field to which the rising middle classes laid claims. It became the terrain of the expansion of female activity and it was constructed as a gendered, i.e., as a feminine space, a territory which was marked,

---

Neolaias, 1995.

[2] Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families: Welfare versus the State*, (trans. Robert Hurley), London, Hutchinson, 1980 (1st ed. 1977), p. 5.

[3] Petroula Tzovara commenting on the Bill On the Organization of the Labour Inspectors of the Ministry of Economic Affairs which reduced the number of female supervisors to one (provisioned 9 inspectors and 8 supervisors) argued that "A woman is more appropriate for supervising the conditions of female labour, and some of the duties of the inspectors are more concurrent to the female nature", "Women in the body of inspectors for labour", *Ergasia*, no. 26, 5 June 1930, p. 20. Children's courts was another area claimed by women: "We propose judges to be appointed by the supreme judiciary council and not from the Minister of Justice as the bill provisions, and women who have the necessary qualification to take this post given that because of their nature they are more appropriate for this task", "About children's courts", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, nos 130-1, 15 Dec. 1930, p. 6. Maria Svolou one of the inspectors of the Ministry of Economics argued that "[t]he protection of the child is exclusively a woman's work. Because every woman has unconsciously inside her something of the soul of the mother", idem, "Women and Social Welfare", Athens 1922, p. 35. "There was a lot of discussion in the press lately about the introduction of the institution of women's police body. [...] This institution interests us first because it opens a new terrain in female activity and secondly because a woman can offer great service especially in what concerns children's and girls' protection from various dangers", in "Newsreel", *Ellinis*, no. 101, 30 Sept. 1929, p. 5.

conquered and expanded by the pioneers of the campaign for the rights of women who, by establishing various philanthropic societies and institutions, launching journals, and preparing legislative projects, participated actively in and shaped to a large extent the formation of state social policy.

As it was stated before, one of the characteristics of the inter-war period was the internationalization of welfare policy. Feminist organizations participated in the congresses of the League of Nations and had close cooperation with the respective European feminist organizations: the League for the Rights of Women co-operated with the International Woman Suffrage Alliance established in 1888 in Washington, the National Council of Greek Women with the International Alliance of Women and the Socialist Club with the International Alliance of Socialist Women. Two general streams of inter-war feminism can be identified: radical feminism, which was represented by the League for the Rights of Women and the conservative represented by the National Council of Greek Women.[4] Despite the different political stances, radical feminists and socialists became members of the National Council which, as a federal organization, manifested a "united feminine activity". Since 1919 (when re-established as a member of the International Alliance of Women), until the Second World War the National Council of Greek Women housed a large number of unions (the number ranged from forty to seventy five). The International Alliance of Women promoted civil rights for women, women's right to work, the protection and rights of children, the abolition of slavery, undertook action concerning the introduction, revision and enforcement of labour legislation concerning women and children, and the abolition of prostitution. The League of Greek Women was established in 1897 and the National Council of Greek Women in 1908. The latter organization issued the journal *Ellinis* (1921-1940). In 1920 the League for the Rights of Women (Avra Theodoropoulou, Maria Negreponti, Maria Svolou, Agni Roussopoulou, Anna Papadimitriou) launched the journal *O Agonas tis Ginaikas* (1923-1936) and promoted equal civil rights for women. It encompassed three committees, one for the introduction of legislation, one for labour and one for education. Maria Svolou was also a member of the International Committee of Experts in the International Labour Office for women's issues (1933). In 1958 and 1961 she was elected as Member of Parliament of *Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera* (EDA) [Unified Democratic Left].

---

[4] Aggelika Psarra, "Feminists, socialists, communists and politics in the inter-war period" in Giorgos Mavrogordatos and Christos Chatjiiosif *Venizelismos kai astikos eksichronismos*, Panepistimiakes ekdoseis Kritis, 1988, p. 68; Effi Avdela and Aggelika Psarra (eds.), *O Feminismos Stin Ellada tou Mesopolemou: Mia Anthologia* [Feminism in Inter-War Greece: An Anthology], Athens, Gnosi, 1985.

Apart from the political claims and the demands for political rights, feminist organizations launched a campaign for the improvement of hygienic conditions of working-class families, child welfare, the establishment of the Court of Justice for Juveniles, the foundation of orphanages and the creation of job opportunities for women and girls as well as the education of working-class girls. These issues were perceived as belonging to and marked the territory of feminist activity. No matter the political orientation of its members, female involvement and activism would only be worthwhile and effective through unity. *Sosialistiki Zoi* (1928-1935) was established by the Socialist Women's Group and served as the official organ of the Greek Socialist party. Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou founder of the Socialist Women's Group (1919), delineated the common ground of feminist political intervention:

> A conference has to be organized the soonest to define the general lines of humanitarian and political orientation of our struggle, on which we must agree and discuss and elaborate in detail its aspects, namely, women's education, female philanthropy, the protection of the child and minors, the professional organization of women [...]. The time has arrived for Greek feminist to program its activities seriously. Every independent union that handles purely female issues should be subjected to the general program born out of the discussion among the totality of Greek women and to the control of this totality.[5]

Near East Relief Foundation and the Red Cross played a significant role in the rehabilitation of refugees. The Near East Relief Foundation (which founded the Club of Working Girl in 1930 and which was brought under the National Institution for the Protection of Working Child in 1935), the House of Girls and YWCA established a number of workshops where refugee girls were provided with utilitarian and practical education in order to pursue an "independent economic life". Girls were engaged in knitting, sewing, lace-making, weaving, rug-weaving, tailoring, carpeting and shoe making. Since the late nineteenth century until the 1980s girls in orphanages, Sunday Schools, the House of Working Girl, and in reformatory school were subjected to this kind of practical education that was considered the "appropriate" education for girls in order to perform "female" working-class jobs. Near East Relief activities were concentrated on the support of orphans and involved setting up orphanages for Christian refugee children and providing them with general educational and vocational skills. In the autumn of 1922 22,000 orphans were brought from Turkey to Greece. Three fifths of the orphans were Armenian refugees whom Near East Relief placed in Armenian communities in Europe, the US, the Soviet Union etc. Children of kindergarten age were placed in the "Doll

---

[5] Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou, "Foreign Female Activity", *Ellinis*, no. 11, Nov. 1924, p. 239.

House" orphanage in Cephalonia. The orphanages in Syra and Corinth catered for both boys and girls. In the city of Athens older girls were placed temporarily in the Old Palace Orphanage with the aim to be sent to work as servants.[6] Vocational training began at the age of ten and continued until their graduation at the age of sixteen. Only the orphanage of Syra, which accommodated 2,500-3,000 boys and girls, trained its graduates as elementary teachers. In the late 1920s most orphanages were closed. Boys were sent as "apprenticeships" in farming and were provided with money, clothes and board.

An age-old practice in orphanhoods was to educate and position their inmates as domestic servants. Amailieion Orphanage was established in 1855 and the vocational school of Amalieio Orphanage educated girls as chambermaids. Georgios Typaldos, who was member of the administrative committee, castigated the policy of the orphanage: "Dear Ladies, the administration of every educational institution, and especially of a girls' orphanage is not an easy task. There are a lot of people in our society who have a wrong idea about the administration of the orphanage. [...] They believe that the sole destination of this institution is to produce servants. Of course, the profession of the worker in the house is an appropriate profession for orphan girls. But you, Ladies, do you believe that the aim of the Amalieio Orphanage should be restricted to the production of servants?"[7] Although there was strong resistance during the nineteenth century regarding the policy of the orphanage of supplying domestic servants, it was not only until shortly before 1930 that the orphanage changed its policy: "If one considers that a few years ago the institution produced girls without any education or suitable only for chambermaids for great houses while little sewing and embroidery, one cannot but give congratulation to its Director Mrs K. Papajeorjiou, who had the initiative to transform the simple workshop to real school that gives full skill and training to orphan girls".[8] The Foundling House of Athens was considered also to be a supplier of servants. In an interview with the director conducted by Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou, the high mortality of infants was celebrated as the only solution to the big number (1,500 on the average per year) of infants that enter every year: "Believe me that in this way the foundling house, if all these children survived, would be transformed to the worse register office for domestic servants, prostitutes and tramps".[9]

---

[6] Dimitra Giannouli, "American Philanthropy in the Near East: Relief to the Ottoman Greed Refugees, 1922-23", Kent State University, 1992. (Unpublished PhD thesis), p. 219.

[7] Georgios Typaldos-Kozakis, Report of the workings of the administrative committee of Amalieion orphanage, 1888, p. 7.

[8] "Newsreel", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 137, 31 March 1931, p. 5.

[9] Athina Giatanou Gianniou, "The Foundling House of Athens and Motherhood", *Ellinis*, no 1, year 2, January

Part of the rehabilitation policy of refugees was to direct children to domestic service. The Near East Relief Foundation supplied middle-class households with orphan refugee children who worked as domestic servants and received a small salary.

> The American organization Near East Relief Foundation organized in the fourth of January a festival in Zappeion for refugee girls whom the organization had positioned in families, either as servants or for adoption. In this way, more than 200 girls accompanied by the members of the families with which they reside were gathered. [...]
>
> We must confess that without the moral and material help of the Near East Relief the huge bulk of the thousands orphans of the Asia Minor catastrophe would entirely burden Greek society.[10]

The Club of the Working Girl organized an annual Christmas party while they also had evening classes for working girls. The director of the Club was Amalia Lykourezou.[11] Women's wages when employed in philanthropic or similar institutions and schools were much lower than any other private enterprise.[12] Athina Gaitanou-Giannou, president of the Socialist Women's Group, admired the embroidery work produced in the Empeirikion reformatory school for girls. The inmates were employed in luxury lingerie, dress making, hat making for women, men's underwear.[13]

The Patriotic Alliance of Greek Women was established as a charitable society by the 6030 decree of the Court of First Instance in Athens on 8th November 1914. The President of the Association was Queen Sophia, the Vice-President Mrs Straight, and the General Secretary was Kalliroi Parren. The aims of the society were a) during periods of war: 1) the support of Red Cross through the organization of hospitals and hospitalization of injured and ill, 2) the provision of help to the army and to the destitute families of the mobilized. During periods of peace: 1) the provision of help and medical care for the destitute, 2) the protection and welfare of destitute and unprotected children, 3) the diffusion of hygienic consultation to the low classes, 4) the establishment of a School of Housekeeping 5) the protection of unprotected young females and their provision with information for appropriate resort and employment. 6) concern with every issue related to the national and social solidarity and purity of morals.[14] The Association had eleven branches among which a branch which provided mess allowance,

---

1924, p. 32.

[10] "A festival of Near East Relief for its dispersed children", *Ellinis*, no. 1, January 1926, pp. 7-8.

[11] *Ellinis*, no 10, 1932.

[12] "Maria Svolou, "The Greek female worker", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 7, Feb. 1924, p. 4.

[13] "The Embirikeion Asylon", *Ellinis*, no. 3, 1934, p. 93.

[14] Genika Archeia tou Kratous (GAK) [General Archives of the State], *The Patriotic Alliance of Greek Females*, pp. 2-3.

an Office of Employment, a Branch for the Destitute whose members visited destitute families to testify and assess their needs, a Branch for the Education which established kindergartens and day nurseries, a Branch of Hygiene which organized lectures and aimed at constituting a body of district nurses for the education and moralization of poor families, a branch for the welfare of infants which instructed mothers regarding hygiene and provided families with wet-nurses. The ladies supervised the wet-nurses by visiting the infants twice to evaluate the conditions in which they were kept and records were kept of the attentive wet-nurses. The Alliance established a Multi-clinic for Pupils that undertook the vaccination of pupils. The Branch of Housekeeping organized three classes, namely, cooking, sewing and domestic economy for "ladies", "women of the lower classes", and domestic servants.[15]

In 1917 with the passing of 808 Act and the 1172 Amendment, the Patriotic Alliance was transformed into the Patriotic Institution for Welfare under the Ministry of Welfare. On 5 May 1921 with the return of the King the Patriotic Alliance was re-established under the Queen. In 1923 the decree in 26/9/1923 abolished the Patriotic Alliance of Greek women and the Patriotic Institution of Welfare was re-established with the responsibility of the protection of the child. In 5/3/1929 with the 4062 Act it was renamed to Patriotic Institution for the Protection of the Child and became statutory body under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.

The Patriotic Alliance was purveyed by the "scientific" principles of social welfare according to which its program was perceived as an organic law of "New Society".[16] The program was not perceived as charity but as a distribution of social capital that would prevent the loss of further human and material resources from the deterioration of the population. The intervention of institutions would contribute to reconciliation of social classes and impede social unrest.

> This endeavour aims at supporting the healthy in their work in order not to have to nurse more sick in the hospital, at protecting and looking after the child in order to dispel death and chronic disease, at organizing women's labour, at supporting the working-class household, at reconstituting the communication and cooperation between social classes.[17]

As we have already seen, domestic service was excluded from the legislation on children's and women's labour. The few attempts to bring domestic service under legislative protection and to

---

[15] Ibid., p. 38.
[16] Ibid., Report of Spyros Loverdos in 1921, pp. 38-9.
[17] Report of Spyros Loverdos 1921, p. 50.

set a minimum age of entering service met the resistance from both groups of society or the state officials. Although as early as 1921 the Director of the inspectors had acknowledged the need for legislative action in order to protect children in domestic service from overworking, domestic service remained outside labour legislation until the 1950s. The 199/1936 Emergency Act On the Amendment of Some Labour Laws which set the age of fourteen as the minimum age of entering service was annulled by the Supreme Court of Appeal. However,, in the public debates on child labour, domestic service held a prominent place codifying the more violent form of child exploitation. Domestic service was a point of intersection between various discourses on child welfare and a point of conflict between philanthropic activity and social policy. The figure of the juvenile servant became particularly in the 1930s a means for the campaign of the abolition of child labour and the enforcement of labour legislation.

In the 1920s the law on the abolition of child labour was not enforced and children were not withdrawn from industry. Child labour was perceived as an unavoidable and even desirable necessity as the low wages of children were beneficial for the industrial development of the country. Besides, children's earnings were vital for the survival of destitute refugee families. Furthermore, only certain forms of child labour were considered dangerous for the moral and physical welfare of children. Although the majority of children worked in agriculture there was absolutely no attempt to bring agricultural work under labour legislation, as this type of labour was not perceived as threatening the moral existence of lower-class families. It was children working in the street and destitute children that became the target of control by the state. The inspectors of labour showed reluctance to enforce the law on the protection of children arguing that children out of work would spend their time in the streets.

Children were perceived as children of the state though, in practice, the abolition of child labour was not achieved. However, the idea of childhood had been assigned to working class children (which had already been attributed to middle class children) and working class children became the repositories of the hopes of the nation's salvation. The regeneration of the nation had to pass through the regeneration of children although it was not yet part of society's consciousness that protection could be manifested in the release of children from economic contribution: "We believe that children's upbringing is the prime basis of the total upbringing of the society".[18] The inspector Maria Svolou wrote in 1924 that the Ministry of Economic Affairs "recognizes its inability to implement the Act on the Minimum Age of Children in Employment because the economic conditions of recent years are such that the wages of

---

[18] Elmina Pantelaki, "The National Women's Council and education", *Ellinis*, nos. 6-7, Aug.-Sept. 1921, p. 154.

children are necessary for their survival".[19] The family became a public domain on which the nation's progress was dependent. The control of both middle-class and working-class families was pursued through making the child the centre of public policy.

It was the moralization of working-class family and the reformation of the middle-class family that were the main targets of state and philanthropic intervention. For that reason it was not the impersonal relations of the workshop but instead the family and the face to face relationships within the middle-class household that facilitated the depiction of working children as exploited and served to express the detrimental effects of child labour more vividly. The figure of the skivvy encompassed suffering and exploitation more than any other child worker and became a figurative device for launching political demands. The idea of childhood had been extended to all children and it meant that children should lose their economic value. As the number of children in industry started to decrease, children who worked in domestic service provoked the intervention of various groups who were involved in the campaign for the protection of the child and promoted the abolition of child labour.

> And last in the order but first in suffering comes the skivvy. Who is going to extol in the macabre tune the misery of this child, of this slave on whom the housewife's nerves break, whose human essence is dissolved under the curses of her mistress and on whom the instincts of sons and masters break into under the silent sanctum of family morals! [...] And horror expands in thousands infections, physical and mental which poison all the society. [...] The sick child that infects others with consumption, the criminal, the erratic, these are the fruits of indifference that will have to be paid not only morally but in cash for their treatment. [...] If surpassing the obstacles has been impossible this must be attributed to the fact that all legislative measures are simply repressive and are incarnated in isolated prohibitions that are not adequate. Because, they try to eliminate the effects of social evil and not the causes. And the causes of child labour are exclusively economic. Positive measures should operate under one principle: the elevation of the social and economic level of the working classes. These measures are: a. The introduction of a minimum age, b. the application of social security to all types of employment, c. The introduction of the eight hour day to all kinds of employment, d. the organization of a network of measures and institutions of welfare [...] The primary demand that arises out of this cruel reality is: *Abolition of child labour.* [...] Extension of labour legislation to all wage earning jobs and to domestic servants. Regulation of the age of entering employment, hours of labour, health security, security against accidents, etc.[20]

The form of the above narrative bears the elements of melodrama based upon the themes of suffering, prostitution and sexual exploitation. This form could express the two facets of the

---

[19] Maria Svolou, "The Greek female worker", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no 7, Feb. 1924, p. 3.

discourse: the dangerous side of the working class threatening the stability of society and the desire to rescue children from the cruelty of adults. It encompassed the theme of sexual exploitation as a form of class exploitation and sexuality as a site of the dangerousness of the working class.[21] Implicit in the narrative is also the anxiety of the middle class for the moral, material and physical threat that servants constituted for the middle-class family. This fear led to a campaign for the professionalization of domestic service through the intervention of the police and private institutions. Domestic service was not considered a private issue which middle-class mistresses had to handle but a matter which had to be brought to the public. Although in the third quarter of the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth century feminists and philanthropists undertook the regulation of the mistress-servant relationship, during the inter-war period domestic service began to be perceived as a territory of state intervention. However, state intervention in domestic service was a point of conflict. Maria Svolou was one of the few voices that clearly campaigned for the extension of labour legislation to domestic service and especially on setting an age limit in the employment of children in domestic service.

Since the early 1930s the number of children in industry had started to fall. Children constituted a flexible labour force whose entrance and exit in the labour market depended on the fluctuations in the family budget: in periods of hardship, children were put in employment while when family budget rose they were withdrawn. The economic crisis, the pressures of the International Labour Office for the enforcement of labour legislation and the introduction of social security legislation gave a new impulse to the debate on the abolition of child labour. Since the withdrawal of children from industry was perceived as a remedy for the rise of unemployment, child labour was no longer considered as a safety valve against vagrancy and prostitution but the very cause of immorality and a threat to the health and morals of children and in extension of the family, both middle-class and working-class. Furthermore, the expansion of institutions and measures for the welfare of child and for the elimination of children's criminality made child labour a focal point and its abolition a prerequisite for the moralization of the family and the welfare of children.

The discussion on domestic service as a form of child labour was a point of intersection of different discourses and illuminates the clash of interests between middle-class interests and state policy but also the ambivalence towards the prohibition of children under 14 years of age

---

[20] Maria Svolou, "The working child", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, 130-131, 15 Dec. 1930, pp. 2-3 [my emphasis].
[21] Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority*, p. 168.

to enter domestic service. The novelist Lilika Nakou opened a debate on child labour, in *Ergasia,* a journal which supported the Liberal Party, which held office in the 1930-1932 period. This publication acted as a laboratory where economic and labour policy was produced and debated. In her article, Lilika Nakou described the appalling conditions experienced by children who worked as servants in terms of housing, remuneration, food, and mistreatment by their mistresses. She started by posing a rhetorical question: "It is for some days that I have been asking whether a law exists to protect 9 and 10 years old children from the "kindness" of the Greek female bourgeois".[22] And she continues:

> Yes, for these children who are accepted in families "for gratitude" in order to "be saved, to be made human beings" while they pester them. It is about the skivvies, mainly females, but also males. I see in every *small* bourgeois house a skinny little child bending from the tiredness of the day's work and the hands swollen from work and the eyes --oh, these eyes-- deep-set, with black circles and the painful gaze. The rich closed in their palaces, surrounded by lackeys are more excusable than us, their soul does not suffer because they don't see them. But us we have "got used" to this tragic spectacle and we are unforgivable. Haven't we seen in the carnival, in the parties, every night this martyr who stays sleepless until 2-3 o'clock in the morning waiting her employers to finish their entertainment and their draw poker? Who hasn't seen, and not felt sorry, this child shivering in the kitchen or in the corridor and exhausted from sleeplessness or from the day's tiredness? Yes, infants who work from morning till the evening most of them without receiving any remuneration apart from meagre food. But, they say, they learn how to become human beings and the girls learn housekeeping while boys to read and write for which they pay by the sweat of their brow. This poor skivvy sweeps, washes the dishes, lays beds and on top of that "run to the grocer's, run to the greengrocer's" and the limitless nagging of the Greek female housewife. Not to talk about Sundays, what a pain and worry are for the skivvy. You must have seen it for sure. The family of Mr Policeman or of Mr Clerk goes out for a walk. And the skivvy follows..."[23]

Again as with Maria Svolou, a melodramatic tone is employed to launch the demand for the implementation of labour legislation on children. In the above passage, it is the bourgeois family and especially the female bourgeois who is rendered responsible for the exploitation of children. The gendered and class prejudice against the lower middle-class woman as opposed to the upper class who employed professional adult domestic servants was a *locus communis* in the debates on the exploitation of children. In fact, the number of servants which a household employed became a means to identify the status of the middle class. The oral sources show that it was mainly middle-class and lower middle-class families that employed children as maids of

---

[22] Lilika Nakou,, "Working Children", *Ergasia,* 8, 1-3-1930, p. 18.

all work and who did not have the economic means to employ more than one servant. The castigation of mistresses was one of the means to enter the middle-class family with the aim of educating middle-class females. As we shall see the discourse on family and children was always a gendered discourse.

The "old" argument which suggested that child labour was a remedy for idleness and parental neglect which in turn led boys to destitution and girls to prostitution, both of which threatened to shake the foundations of society, was still a valid argument for the middle class. In the debate over the mistreatment of servants by their mistresses, Ioanna Karastamati, responding to Lilika Nakou's accusations, argued that the physical and psychic injuries experienced by children in service should not be placed at the same level of importance as the welfare and order of society.

> I admit that the things written by Miss Nakou are true and that children "suffer" what she says. But shouldn't we examine another aspect of this issue? That these children, entering to the service of families and suffering by mistresses, originate from families that because they are unable to feed them they are obliged to give them to families for food, clothes and even a small payment. Has Miss Nakou thought what would happen to these creatures if they stayed with their families under the conditions they live and not being able to provide them with a piece of bread? They would wander in the streets hungry, without clothes leading a vagabond life exposed to the worse conditions of life and developing into the worse citizens, a threat for society. And this about the boys. As for girls, the plight and the end of those girls who have been left to the mercy of God, or rather of the street, is well known. For this reason, I believe that it would be a thousand times more beneficial for both society and girls if girls remained in [the employers'] families *even if they are scolded, cursed or beaten by their mistresses* [...] I believe that since these children cannot be supported by their own families it is better that they enter into the service of families where their morality is undoubtedly less endangered.[24]

The above stance was representative of those who saw voluntary activities and institutions as the response to the problem of juvenile delinquency and as a means to prevent of social turbulence. Alekos Raptarchis responding to this article recognized the suffering of children in service and proposed the following remedy. He argued that middle-class women or those who aspired to be middle-class should be educated in order to perform their role as civilizers and moralizers of the lower classes:[25]

If the State is not able to protect these little creatures, it is society's duty to take

---

[23] ibid., [my emphasis].

[24] Ibid, p. 27 and 29 [my emphasis].

[25] Alekos Raptarhis, "Greek Women's Duty", *Ergasia*, 15, 19-4-1930, p. 29.

> on this task by illuminating the less educated and more naive of is members about their duties... these children's state is going to get better day after day only if more people devote themselves in extinguishing this evil and in illuminating "mistresses" about the meaning of the words philanthropy, solidarity, gentleness and delicacy. Ignoring the meaning of these words Greek woman will not deserve to be considered educated and civilized woman.[....]

The debate on servant labour provided an entrance into the middle-class family. Middle-class housewives were the target of a civilizing process that demanded the protection of the child and the regulation of relationships in the private sphere of the house. Pavlos Nirvanas, a prominent writer who held a daily chronicle column in the *Estia* gazette, devoted several articles on domestic servants and conveyed his anxiety about the mistreatment and the physical deformation of juvenile servants. He recited a letter by a doctor:

> "I believe that it must have happened to you very often to see in the streets little girls between 6-10 years old whom some so called philanthropists take as skivvies or foster children in their houses in order to provide for them. [...] A lady came to my office to examine an eight-nine years old girl. This child, a pale and weak thing, had a very grave left thoracic scoliosis, pain in the lumbar area of spine, nocturnal urination among other things. After I examined it I asked what kind of jobs (which are above its strength and its age) it does, and I was told that apart from holding the baby from the morning until the evening, it carried water in the house from a tap because there was no water in the house. And when I told the lady that this child should not do these heavy jobs the soft-hearted lady replied: 'And why would I have her? to eat my food for free and sit on the chair. I took her as a foster child to provide for her and to work. Otherwise, it's better her to leave'. I was astonished by the nice theories of this lady, I gave her the advice I ought to and I decided to write to you asking via you the intervention of the police or philanthropic institutions for the protection of children". [...]
>
> We are not talking here about just an isolated case. As Mr Chrysafis very correctly mentioned, there is a whole category of this kind of crimes. We all observe every day these tragic creatures of 9, 8 and even 7 years old, condemned to degenerate into the state the little sick girl degenerated. [...] It is white slave traffic conducted freely in the midst of Athens. It is a horrific social crime that should not be continued for a minute after the revealing publication of Mr Chrysafis letter. [...] Not only should this barbarity be extinguished in a few hours but a permanent office should be established to control the conditions of work, the food and the salary of these juvenile slaves, authorized to enforce the measures and obliged to control their implementation. If this country claims to be a country of civilized men this action ought to start tomorrow.[26]

Three voices are heard in this narrative: The doctor's, the mistress's and the journalist's. The

---

[26] Pavlos Nirvanas, "Human beasts of burden", *Estia*, 25 June 1926.

doctor's account was a scientific narrative using medical terms to describe the deformation of the child's body through work. The scientific language attached a higher status and validity to the story. Although the conditions of servant labour were described in a sensational manner by Nirvanas, the measures he proposed are disproportionate to the level of mistreatment. Although he argued for the regulation of servant labour, he did not mention the introduction of the minimum age of entering employment for children which would thus have led to the abolition of juvenile domestic labour. At the centre of the narrative was the middle-class female who was not capable of being reeducated or reformed. It was the state and private institutions that should have intervened to control and regulate the middle-class family in order to eliminate the criminal activities of housewives against children. Here again the protection of the child and the regulation of child labour were perceived as part of a civilizing process of the nation. In an article written by Nirvanas a few weeks later, he cited another example of the mistreatment of a female juvenile servant beaten by her mistress and enclosed in a well for punishment which clarifies even further the ambivalences towards bringing domestic service under child labour legislation.

> If I had the slightest suspicion that this story of the well would move anybody, more than the story of scoliosis by Mr Chrysafis, I would remind that the American females of Near East Relief, when they positioned small refugee girls as servants in various houses, visited every now and then their little protégé and checked how they lived, how they ate, how much money they received and what kind of treatment they had from their masters. Wouldn't it be possible one of these societies authorized by the state to undertake a kind of supervision of juvenile local skivvies? And to take care so that the obligations about provision to be incarnated in some kind, even very small salary, put in the savings bank? It is a joke to have laws for the labour and protection of the child that are enforced in shops, factories, offices, agricultural work, and these laws to stop on the doorstep of a house. Unless the status of the master in one's own house entails that he is justified to be a tyrant, oppressor and tormentor of white juvenile slaves.[27]

Nirvanas argued not for the abolition of child labour but for the intervention of private institutions in the family. The middle-class house was indeed treated as inaccessible to the state regulation. Domestic service was widely accepted as a means of rehabilitating orphan and poor children. As we shall see later when individual stories cross public stories, the Near East Relief Foundation did not succeed in preventing the mistreatment of juveniles by their mistresses. The checks in the houses in which juveniles were placed were superficial and when children complained about being beaten or the restriction of food, the President simply gave moral

advice to mistresses about how to behave towards children. The paternalistic attitude towards working-class children and the immunity of juvenile domestic labour from state regulation is illustrated in the following account of the Club for Working Girls founded by the Near East Relief Foundation.

> The hospitable Club is a spiritual and psychic resort for 350 girls of the people, which endows small female workers of industries and houses with civilization and education, and endows the prematurely shrivelled up faces with laughter, making them forget their melancholic social position, their bitter poverty and the heavy slavery of their work. In the spacious rooms of the Club, the children of poverty, all between 10-20 years old --every night after 7 o'clock read instructive books, stories, play domino and the new very amusing American games like ping-pong and badminton. [...] Next to a sympathetic little eight-year old servant, who after a lot of troubles, managed to get every evening a leave from her "mistress" in order not to remain illiterate, a twenty-year old young woman learns the alphabet. Two really moving endeavours.[28]

However, Maria Svolou, the inspector of the Ministry of Economics and General Secretary of the League for the Rights of Women commented on the previous account and considered philanthropic activity as inadequate to respond to the new demands of society and even damaging to the welfare of children. Voluntary institutions were seen as a drawback to the implementation of legislation on child labour and as contributing to the exploitation of children:[29]

> Good are the private endeavours for bettering the life of working children and the provision of education from which they are deprived in today's society. But there is a point in which instead of being useful they are harmful and become the cause of the cruellest exploitation of the child. Parnassos and the Club for the Working Girl and all the similar institutions educate children under fourteen years old, that is, children who work in order to survive, and for this reason they cannot go to daily school something that is strictly forbidden by law. The State in order to be in accordance with the international treaties that has been signed in order to appear civilized has implement legislation for compulsory education and for the prohibition of children's labour under fourteen years old. The best these institutions could do is to denounce those parents who exploit their children under the age limit defined by law instead of sending them to school and to demand the severe punishment of employers and various "ladies" who employ little children as the "lady" referred to in our article today with the skivvy of eight years old. We could then argue that these institutions serve the interests of the working class. What they do today is to provide employers with cheap or unpaid labour.

---

[27] Pavlos Nirvanas, "The Skivvies", *Estia*, 9 July 1926.

[28] K. Theologitou, "A visit in the Club of the Working Girl", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 164, Feb. 1933, p. 7.

[29] "Newsreel", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no 164, Feb. 1933, p. 7.

The conflicting approaches towards juvenile domestic labour suggest a shift in state social policy on children in the early 1930s. Childhood and work started to be perceived as incompatible. Furthermore, it was understood that the removal of children from work could only be possible with mass schooling. The clash between state social policy and philanthropic institutions was a clash between opposing perceptions towards the protection of the child but also a clash between interests. Those who participated in the formation of the state social policy handled children as a property of the state and understood the welfare of the child as a right. Philanthropic institutions continued to treat domestic service as a means of rehabilitation of children and responded to the middle-class demand for cheap servants in a period in which the "servant problem", that is the shortage of domestic servants was more acute than ever before.

Philanthropic institutions were castigated for fostering parental neglect and obstructing the state from enforcing legislation; moreover, the blame was put on employers for exploiting children.

The campaign for the abolition of child labour and the protection of the juvenile female servant was based on the cooperation of institutions and agents such as the police, inspectors, journalists, and doctors. The dictatorial regime of Ioannis Metaxas also gave a new impetus to the institutions for the welfare of the child. Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, the Director of General Police during the liberal government of Venizelos, dealt explicitly not with domestic servants who served the upper class, who employed more than one servant, but with servants "employed as children by the middle class (families of civil servants, clerks, lieutenants, small entrepreneurs, merchants, and professionals with a small clientele)".[30] These families, he argued, did not have adequate means to employ more than one servant. Koutsoumaris cited several cases of the mistreatment of juvenile servants by their employers. In an investigation which he conducted from reports to the police, he concluded that these children had entered the employers' families between the age 4-8 and after several years of mistreatment (the majority had stayed for more than six years in service) either they were expelled by their employers or accused of theft and immoral behaviour by employers in order not to pay their wages. Most of these girls were between 13-14 years old and they were either found in the hospital injured by their employers or wandering in the streets. Koutsoumaris argued for the prohibition of domestic service for girls who were under 14 years old. He also proposed certain measures for

---

[30] Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation of little female servants: measures that have to be taken", *Ellinis*, no. 5, 1934, p. 195.

the prevention of the exploitation of female servants: 1) the regulation of conditions of living in the employer's house and specifically concerning the room where servants slept; 2) the prohibition of work outside the house after nine o'clock in the evening and inside the house after 10 o'clock, 3) the hours of rest should be at least eight; e) the elimination of parental authority and prosecution against parents who do not safeguard their children's interests and who appropriate their daughter's wages; 4) the establishment of an employment office for servants which will substitute the existing register offices; 5) the establishment of an asylum where girls could reside for the period in which they are unemployed; 6) the introduction of servant's booklet which could be supplemented with a health booklet; 7) inclusion of servants in the Social Security legislation; 8) the establishment of evening classes for girls who work as servants and who have not completed primary school education.

Koutsoumaris gave priority to state intervention over philanthropic institutions and argued for the control of philanthropic activity by the state. The majority of philanthropic societies, he wrote, was subsidized by the state while the results of their activities were disappointing. The centralization of social policy and the control and management of resources by the state would lead to a program of social welfare and to a rational distribution of resources which would be directed towards the establishment of foundling hospitals, day nurseries for children of working mothers, shelters for working children, reformatory schools, and technical schools. The outcome of the accomplishment of such a program would lead to a national renaissance.[31] Koutsoumaris was one of the most fervent supporters of Metaxas's welfare policy. During the dictatorship, the Patriotic Institution for the Protection of the Child was renamed with an emergency law into the Patriotic Institution of Social Welfare and Assistance.[32] The expansion of its branches and activities to the support of the poor, infirm, children, and elderly people and its co-operation with philanthropic institutions involved a mobilization of resources but also the continuity of the welfare policy of previous years. The journal *Ellinis,* which had hosted a variety of voices and political stances operating around the axis of the promotion of political and civil rights for women as well as the regulation of children's labour and the protection of the child and which was characterized by an openness to and cooperation with international organizations, was reduced to Metaxa's mouthpiece. In February 1940 the National Council of Greek Women broke its affiliation with the International Alliance of Women and in October 1940 it was declared a philanthropic society.

---

[31] Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "Social Welfare for the protection of the child in our country", *To Paidi*, no. 41, Jan.-Feb. 1937, pp. 36-39.

During the dictatorship its activities expanded through their participation in projects with the government and its funding by the state. Although some societies broke away from the Alliance and some important personalities withdrew their cooperation, the basic line, objectives, and activities of the Alliance suggest a continuity with the previous years.

Servant labour became a pivotal issue for those who argued for the intervention of the state in child labour. Their discourse was organized around the theme of exploitation, and it was a Janus face discourse. The first facet, as we have already seen, concerned the exploitation of children by their employers (mistresses or capitalists, merchants, etc.). But the other side of the coin was the exploitation of children by their parents. The portrayal of the child as victim of her parents justified and legitimized the need to intervene in working class families and to reduce parental control. Koutsoumaris in an article with the explicit title "The need to eliminate parental authority", referred to a servant beaten with a metal instrument by her mistress and then turned off from the house:

> Some months ago a girl from Egina was found destitute in the streets, barefoot and hungry. We took her to the police station and she told us that her mistress had beaten her with a metal instrument (a metal pestle) and then turned her out of the house. We nursed her, we took her to the hospital because the girl had a cranium fracture, we suited the mistress and we sent a telegram to her father. And the result? One morning the girl disappeared from the hospital to avoid examination by the forensic surgeon. The father, because of the right of parental authority, withdrew the prosecution against the mistress who beat the girl in order to get her wages. Later, we found out that the father took his daughter's wages without leaving her a penny.[33]

Another girl was beaten by her mistress because she had eaten a sweet and was locked in the loft and died from gangrene infection. Aristotelis Koutsoumaris argued for the elimination of parental authority and for the intervention of the police and magistrates in order that children be protected from their parents' cruelty. The article finishes with a delineation of the process through which girls resorted to prostitution.

The story of childhood, as Hugh Cunningham said, was to become the story of the nation.[34] For the state, children were a capital that had to be preserved. What worried those who formed the state welfare policy was the deterioration and misuse of vital forces of society. As Apostolos Doxiadis, President of the Patriotic Institution and ex Minister of Social Welfare,

---

[32] "News", *Ellinis*, no 3, March 1936, p. 68.

[33] Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "The need to eliminate parental authority", *Elefthero Vima*, 22 March 1931.

[34] Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since Seventeenth Century*, London, Blackwell, 1991, p. 228.

said: "A defective distribution of capital can lead to the increase of deposits which will have to be invested in the establishment of hospitals, asylums, mental hospitals, prisons (...) Who is responsible for children? First comes the family (...) Yet the state and society have to compensate for the deficiencies".[35]

The solutions had to be scientific.

The elimination of parental authority seemed to be one of the solutions for remedying the exploitation of children. The connection between criminality and child labour became one of the main axes around which discourses on the abolition of children's labour operated. The protection of children was marked as the territory of state and private intervention on which various agents laid claims. It was only certain trades such as errand boys, servants and street vendors that were considered by protectionists as a source of criminality but the value of children as wage earners became incompatible with childhood so that every form of employment and its material benefits were seen as leading to criminality.

> Concerning the individual and social factors of child criminality, Mr Gardikas, having studied the relationship between labour and criminality adds as one factor the employment of children and adolescents. Thus, jobs such as the errand boy, the servant or street vendors (cigarettes, flowers etc.) have an immoralizing effect on young children but *it is above all employment* that leads children to criminal activities. When they earn money they spend at least part of it unbidden, thoughtless and wrongly. Children prematurely entering life before their character has been formed and without having acquired any experience, they slip very easily to crime as they have the monetary means through which they can enjoy themselves. The form that the system of children's courts took does not primarily constitute penal jurisdiction but a kind of reformatory and nurturing jurisdiction *whose purpose is to substitute parental authority* when it is absent or proved insufficient or damaging. This jurisdiction extends not only to minors who surpassed the threshold of penal law but it will be *preventive* extending thus to abandoned and morally and materially abandoned children and adolescents who are in danger of slipping to crime and anti-social life.[36]

Although Ioannis Vergopoulos misread Gardikas' research, which showed that the criminality of servants was minimal, the moralization of working-class family meant that children should lose their economic value, something that could only be implemented if children were removed from the factory and placed in school. A child, thus, had to be protected from its parents and parental authority had to be reduced and mediated by state or private organizations: "Popular

---

[35] Apostolos Doxiadis, "Opening Speech Delivered in the First Pan-Hellenic Conference for the Protection of Motherhood and Child", *To Paidi*, no 4, Nov.-Dec. 1930, p. 9-12.

[36] Ioannis Vergopoulos, "Reformatory establishments and reformatory treatment", *Sofronistikai Pliroforiai*, no 5, year II, Jan.-March 1937, p. 19 [my emphasis].

classes do not welcome the intervention of state or other private institutions in family life. The people are of course suspicious. It needs kindness, and above all a lot of patience in order to convince illiterate parents that this intervention serves their own interests".[37] State and philanthropic intervention targeted the working-class family. The abolition of child labour was only directed at factory work and did not concern children in agriculture or domestic service. It was the children in the city who were the target of institutions and discourses and their control had to be pursued through the intervention in the family.

> Parental authority, to start with, was and remains unrestricted to the point that the child cannot find any protection when his father exploits him as it happens frequently in the poor orders of peasants who give their children as servants from the most tender age and in the working classes of the cities who send their infants to the factory.[38]

Although the discussion on child welfare encompasses different discourses in terms of the political orientation of the various groups involved and the positions they occupied as well as their programs and suggestions, there are also many common elements and overlaps. The portrayal of children as victims of their parents and as potential criminals was well established and intervention in working class families was perceived as a necessity for both voluntarists and social reformers. The importance attributed to the introduction and functioning of children's courts as well as the expansion of societies, reformatory schools, asylums and prisons for the child were an illustration of the determination to police the working-class family.[39] Their main preoccupation was that the living conditions and the attitudes of the working class family threatened to undermine the foundations of social order. Girls were exploited by their parents and were sent to work as servants or in the factories while boys were left unattended in the streets. Low wages and appalling housing conditions led to disease, idleness, alcoholism, theft, political mobilization and prostitution. On the other hand, the link between poverty, overcrowding and debased housing to conspicuous consumption and ignorance implied that the poor were responsible for their condition because they failed to manage the family budget effectively. Spyros Theodoropoulos, a key figure in the formation of social policy, stated that "illiteracy, lack of hygienic knowledge and fatalism were the primary

---

[37] "Editorial", *To Paidi*, no 1, May June 1930, p. 12.

[38] Alexandra Kottou, "The child in the new civil code", *To Paidi*, no. 10, year 2, Nov.-Dec. 1931, p. 30.

[39] The 5098 Act on Children's Courts was introduced in 13 July 1931. Yet, the law remained inactive until 193??[38 not enforced] when children's courts were established. See several articles in the journal *To Paidi*, Konstantinos Gardikas, "Work and Criminality", nos. 31-32, May-Aug. 1935, p. 5-31; Andreas Christodoulou, "The position of reformatory schools in the struggle against criminality", no. 35, 1936, pp. 5-24; no 42, March-April 1937, pp. 5-29; Marios Papadopoulos, "Children's courts in Greece, no. 49-50, May-Aug. 1938, pp. 48-67.

factors of the state of our working class"[40] even though the reports on child labour had acknowledged that children's earnings were indispensable for the survival of the family, and the surveys conducted in 1930 by the Ministry of Economics into the housing conditions of working class families had drawn the conclusion that unemployment and low wages were the causes of the overcrowding and appalling conditions in working class houses.[41]

The discussion of the New Civil Code encompassed the class-based and nationalist discourse on the protection of the child and the need of state intervention in the family:

> As far as the hiring of child services is concerned, I have to say that this relationship takes place in Greece, concerning peasants who bring their children from the countryside to Athens and exploit them wildly. [...]
> All these have to become general principles because the Civil Code and Greek Society are not interested in the upbringing and preservation of the property of the wealthy classes, but are much more interested in the preservation of the morality and of the families of the poorer classes from whom criminality is mainly recruited. The ameliorations suggested by the Civil Code concerning the poorer classes who are often deprived by the supervision of a mother or father and of whom the future of the Nation is depended are not adequate to quiet us.[42]

The terms in which the conditions of working class people were handled determined the solutions and the policy effected. The family was perceived as a mechanism for the reproduction of society and for the maintenance of social order, while state institutions as correctives for the inefficiencies and deficiencies of parental control. Thus, doctors and health visitors would teach mothers how to feed and rear their children, and instill hygienic habits. Labour agencies would direct children to occupations in order to eliminate vagrancy and delinquency. Ultimately, in the cases where parents failed to fulfil their role, the solution was the elimination of parental authority through the substitution of the father by corrective institutions.

> Laws and provisions cannot correct morals. There is a need to organize a truly moral propaganda for the families. [...] School even if from the point of view of education does not do something for the child; it constitutes the best measure against vagrancy. [...] The vagrant life of children in the city is a kind of a street school [...] It is not the countryside that fosters the army of young vagrant children but the big cities. [...] If the family is useless then the state has to detract the morally abandoned child from it, and to protect and educate him. The State has the right to fill in the omissions of parental authority, when

---

[40] Spyros Theodoropoulos, "On the hygienic conditions of the working population", *Ergasia*, no. 18, 6-5-1930, p. 16.

[41] Spilios Agapitos, "Cities' Hygiene", *Ergasia*, no. 18, 10-5-1930, p.11-12.

[42] *Efimeris ton sizitiseon tou astikou kodikos* [Gazette of the Discussion on the New Civil Code], no. 11, 23-30 April 1931, pp. 186,189, 191.

> the family ignores its essential duties. Where the preventive measures do not prove effective then repressive ones have to be performed, which entail the removal of the child from the family environment, with the aim of protecting and educating him.[43]

The social policy on the protection of the child was crystallized in a triptych which constructed children in a state of emergency, that is, as being in danger and as a danger for society. This triptych involved: 1) the protection of orphan children and abandoned infants as well as those who lacked sufficient parental supervision 2) The protection of the working child and 3) The state and social welfare for the protection of sick and perverted children. The welfare of the child was perceived as an impediment to social unrest and as a far-reaching policy for deterring the diffusion of communism.[44]

Against all cries, domestic service remained until the 1950s a category of employment which was not only considered appropriate for girls, but it was also used as a repository for the wretched and unfortunate of society, of those lives caught in the nets of power. It is only through fragments of information that the perceptions and practices of state and private institutions towards service employment can be reconstituted. However, these fragments allow us to see the ways in which lives were formulated by institutions and how this intersected with the authorities.

The 1950 report of the United Nations studying the educational opportunities of women found out boy pupils outnumbered girl pupils by more than 50% while girls left school earlier than boys.

> The dire poverty found in rural districts accounts for the fact that girls have frequently to help their mothers in the house or in the fields, or are sent at an early age to work as domestic servants in the towns.[45]

Lina Tsaldari, Minister of Social Welfare in the Populist Party government and the first female deputy in the Greek parliament, responded to the report of the United Nations with a conservative discourse about women's status in Greece. Although she tried to refute the

---

[43] Panayotes Skouriotis, "Fighting against vagrancy and begging in big cities", *To Paidi*, 1, May-June 1930, pp. 22, 24-26.

[44] "In the past when I was responsible for the enforcement of the "idionimo" for the persecution of communism, I argued in my reports that neither cries against the impeding threat nor bombastic sermons for the danger of national ideals, nor laws like "idionimo" or the truncheons of policemen can fight effectively the expansion of communism. Only if the municipalities, the state and society show human compassion for the poor and miserable, only if they work to better the conditions of labour and life of the mass of working people, it will be possible for the social system and the interests of its delegates to be protected". Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "The need for a systematic organization of social welfare", *Eleftero Vima*, Friday 23 February 1934.

[45] Report of the Secretary-General to the CSW on the UNESCO study of the educational opportunities for

findings of the report about girls' education and employment, she admitted that these were a result of state policy. She argued that women in Greece are free to choose employment, yet the state and private initiative tried to direct them towards professions which were appropriate for their nature. Furthermore, girls' labour in the house and in the fields was presented as an outcome of traditional national characteristics and as a welcome reality.

> As for the customary use of the daughter in our country as a help to her mother in domestic labour and in the fields--as it is stated in the report-- I would like to inform the Committee that neither do we aspire to transform rural areas into urban areas in Greece nor to remove our girls from domestic labour. [...] There is no restraint for women in Greece to perform their preferred profession. But the state and private initiative try to direct them to employment that is appropriate to their nature. There had been established by the State a sufficient number of housekeeping schools which have been destroyed in the decade of the harsh trials of my country.[46]

In addition, although Tsaldari complained that the part of the report that presented domestic service as the most widespread form of female employment gave a misleading image, as she perceived domestic servants not as employees but as family members receiving protection and dowry.

> Very few young girls are sent to towns as servants. And in their vast majority, those who are sent, according to an old custom, they are protected and almost all adopted by the families which employed them, taking care of the preparation of their dowry and of their marriage and whom they consider *almost* as members of the family. Besides, the domestic staff was brought under the Social Security since 1934.[47]

It is interesting that as late as 1950s, despite the extent of the public debate on domestic service as mentioned above, the Minister for Social Welfare reproduced a paternalistic idea of domestic service grounded on custom. The blurring the boundaries between a labour relationship and a familial one and the treatment of servants "almost" as daughters was one of the manipulative strategies of middle-class employers to create emotional dependency and to extract more labour while reflecting to a large extent the position of the servant in the middle-class household that created, as we shall see, ambivalence and crisis in the subjectivity of the servants subjected to this relationship. Furthermore, this approach on domestic service contrasts with the attempts for professionalization of domestic service set as a major task by

---

women, E/CN.61/146, 9 May 1950, Document 22, p. 139-140.

[46] Lina Tsaldari, "Committee for the status of women U.N., IV in Lake Success, 1950", *Ethnikai kai koinonikai politikai prospatheiai* [National and social political endeavours] vol. 1, *To paidi kai i ginaika* [The child and woman, Athens, 1967, p. 189.

feminist organizations in the inter-war period. The idealization of the relationship and the dismissal of the status of employees for domestic servants is contradicted by the following statement of domestic service as an employment covered by social security legislation. Yet, Lina Tsaldari completely ignored that it was exactly the 1934 Act On Social Security that had excluded domestic service from social security.

[47] Ibid., p. 186 [my emphasis].

Chapter Four

The Servant Figure in Discourses on Prostitution and Theft

In the decade after the wars the protection of the child became a public issue and one of the main axes around which the discourses of social welfare were organized. There are two points in which servants intersected. First, as we have already seen, servants were symbols of the most vulgar form of child exploitation and second, they were regarded as dangerous for the family. Both of these issues were placed within the framework of the family. The fear of physical, cultural and moral pollution inserted the distinction between the country and the city, and rural and urban population in the discussion. The differences between the rural migrants and the urban population were not clear-cut and did not necessarily correspond to ideas of purity for the former and moral laxity for the latter. Their registers are arbitrary and acquire different content according the social and historical circumstances. This chapter delineates the politics that assigned a stigma to domestic service.

Female working-class subjectivity has been rendered problematic in both the working-class movement and in conservative discourses and representations. It has been doubly devalued through its feminisation. Firstly, consumption and a preoccupation with commodities have been considered feminine endeavours that account for the appropriation of dominant cultural values. Secondly, the connection between women and sexuality, related to discourses on consumption, constituted female working-class subjectivity as problematic. There is no figure which exemplifies this connection more than that of the servant. There is a degree of symmetry between conservative and left-wing discourses on servants. Both privilege the connection between female subjectivity and consumption as exemplified by the figure of the servant. Yet, where conservative discourses perceive it as promoting class struggle and antagonism, left-wing discourses see this relationship as the underlying factor of false consciousness.

In dealing with cultural meanings of domestic service and representations, this research is not confined to the inter-war period but moves within different temporalities in order to investigate how these representations and meanings bear upon the interviewees' subjectivity. The interviewees' perceptions of domestic service cannot be traced solely in the period they worked as servants. Memory is not a repository of facts that can be recovered but

an active process of creating meaning.[1] Their notion of labour has been shaped by representations across time (although there is not a direct correspondence between the discourses on servants and the meanings that domestic service acquired for the interviewees) and has been influenced by changes in their socio-economic standing, subjective consciousness and labour patterns. This section investigates of how domestic servants were "put into discourse"[2], how they were spoken about and what kind of knowledge was produced about them.

I. Narratives of "sexual danger" in the Nineteenth Century

The conspicuous presence of servants in urban centers created a lot of anxiety for the embassies of Greece in Constantinople and Alexandria in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The connection between domestic service and prostitution, which had occupied social reformers, the police as well as feminists in the first half of the twentieth century, was established in this period. Various discourses intersect in the following report by the embassy of Constantinople and in the response of the major of Ermoupolis (Syros) to the proposal of the ambassador to prohibit the migration of young women from the islands to Constantinople.[3]

> Embassy of Greece in Constantinople
> Peran, 6 March 1873
> Mr. President,
> There is a great number of women especially from the Aegean islands who migrate to Turkey to make a living with their husbands or relatives or even by themselves and come here mainly to work as domestic servants. [...] Since relationships among different ethnicities have been developed, the morals have been loosened and unfortunately many of these women go astray. [...] Your excellency gathers that these young and dispossessed daughters of Greece are in danger in Constantinople. They abandon their poor but honest home and they jump easily to the Pandaimonion, and are at risk of sinking into vice, of losing their religion and every sense of ethnicity and dignity, in short they are driven to complete catastrophe. The surveillance of the conduct of these women by the embassy is impossible as they arrive in swarms and they are dispersed in the metropolis. Neither can the embassy check every house in which Greek women enter. Besides, the aim should be to prevent and avert the circumstances that are the cause of this situation. There might be need to

---

[1] Alessandro Portelli, "What makes oral history different?", in R. Perks and A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader*, London, Routledge, 1998, p. 69.

[2] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 11.

[3] These two documents were handed to Antonios Miliarakis by the lawyer Minos Bogiatzoglous in Syros. See Antonios Miliarakis, *Ipomnimata perigrafika ton Kikladon nison: Andros, Keos,* Athens, 1880, pp. 153-157.

introduce measures of preventing Aegean women to come here. These measures undertaken by the police and by setting limits to the migration of minors who have not reached the eighteenth year or the twentieth could remedy the urgent situation by not offering any excuse to dismiss these measures as offending individual freedom.
Obedient,
E. Simos

Town Hall of Ermoupolis
Ermoupolis 31 August 1874
"About women who migrate to Turkey and especially to Constantinople".
We would like to express our opinion. [...] We attach a table that shows the number of females registered in the municipality who migrated in the last decade, their name and surname, their age, their origin, the date of the certificate issue and the names of females who accompanied them. From this table, which draws its evidence from the records of our archive, it appears that the number of females who migrated from our municipality during the last decade is 349 persons, which is not so big as to provoke anxiety about a threatening corruption of the moral conduct of those who migrate abroad. [...] Migration to richer provinces of the state, to Turkey, and to Egypt is the only way for the inhabitants of many islands of the Aegean to survive. Andros, Tinos, Syros, Serifos, Sifnos, and Naxos send from time to time a lot of women who enter rich houses as live-in servants and wet-nurses and accumulating a very small sum, they return finally home. This migration leads to the distortion of simple morals of islanders and especially of young women who in their naivety fall in the nets of corruption [...] But this evil is very difficult to dissuade with any other means than that of governmental action that should care for the development of these islands from which women migrate to Turkey. [...] The development of the means of communication from the islands, and of the local production not only by men but also women could provide the means for subsistence and the means to cultivate silk. Every other attempt to dissuade this evil, which very justly the embassy in Constantinople describes, not only goes against our laws but it is also unfair, as it would deprive people who are completely dispossessed and thus unable to survive in their home from the freedom to migrate. Neither the risk of corruption nor the gender or minor status could justify this prohibition to those who exercise parental or male authority and to deprive them from their right to use it in its full in order to sustain their hungry families. But we should allocate the supervision of the moral conduct of Greek women to the eldest and more educated men of their compatriots and the embassy should be entitled to send back the Greek woman who has diverted from our ancestral morals.
Obedient,
D. Vafeiadakis
Mayor of Ermoupolis

As we shall see, the majority of women from the Cycladic islands traveled during the nineteenth century to Constantinople, Smyrna and Egypt from Syros. Although women migrated from other areas of Greece and the Ottoman Empire to these cities, Cycladic women

formed the biggest proportion of migrant women who worked as servants. It is thus easily understood why the ambassador' document in Constantinople is addressed to the major of Ermoupolis which was the administrative centre of this group of islands. It is also clearly stated in the above documents that the prohibition concerns the migration of females originating from the Aegean islands. Furthermore, the request of prohibiting migration of these women, no matter how unrealistic, was expected to be enforced in Ermoupolis. The mayor in Folegandros also acted as policeman, public prosecutor and health officer. According to the municipal archives there were 349 women who migrated from Syros in the course of a decade. These women who migrated became the object of a discourse on sex. "The putting into discourse of sex", as Foucault put it, and which takes here the form of the sexualization of domestic service is very masterly controlled in its verbal expression.[4] The words that would make it too visibly present have been extinguished: "morals have been loosened", "sinking into vice", "complete catastrophe", "distortion of simple morals", "this evil", "corruption", all serve to avoid to say too much directly and overtly about sex and all try to introduce an authorized vocabulary that talked about sex discretely. This discourse on sex took place in the realm of power institutions and became a means of the exercise of power. The ambassador's report is an illustration of a new genre that Judith Walkowitz called "narratives of sexual danger".[5] These narratives become institutions as they emanate from social actors who draw their legitimacy and status from their position in society. They are rendered credible and hold a privileged relation to truth as their status is defined by the social credentials of the speakers and the places they talk from. Each institution, as Michel de Certeau argues using W. V Quine's and J. S. Ullian's term, constitutes the "web of belief".[6] Observing the urban poor, counting them, and keeping files of them became means of policing society. The woman in public became the symbol of lower-class sexual disorder. Here different discourses overlap and forge each other. The urban-rural division intersects with the discourses of sex and nationalism.

The nostalgia for a "golden age of propriety" is a common element of all these discourses which linked consumption, and the desire for luxury and prostitution, although this link became much tighter in the twentieth century. Prostitution although not named explicitly was considered as a diversion from "ancestral morals". Ancestral in this case referred to the "simple morals" of the countryside as opposed to the modern demoralizing environment of the

---

[4] Foucault, *Sexuality*, p. 12.

[5] Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, London, Virago 1994, p. 2.

[6] Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 32.

city. Moreover, these ancestral morals were nationalized. It was the countryside and the peasant through their songs and everyday life that preserved the quintessential and unalterable elements of Greek identity, that is, language and religion. The rise of folklore studies after the 1830s, together with historiography, served to establish the temporal and spatial continuity of the Greek nation and to integrate the rural population in the newly established Greek state. Greek intellectuals tried to establish connection between the language of the folk songs and the Homeric epic as well as between customs, costumes, marriage and funeral rites, dances to ancient Greek ones.[7] These ideas constituted a common ground of communication between the mayor of Ermoupolis and the ambassador of Constantinople. They both agreed that migration and contact with other ethnicities had contaminating effects on the pure ancestral customs and morals of Greek women. The "loosening of morals" was the outcome of the urban environment and coming into contact with other ethnicities. The fear that these women might loose their ethnic and religious consciousness illustrates the nationalization of the discourse on morality and the predominant symbolic role of women in the nation. In these discourses of social control and policing, it was women and women's bodies that came to represent disorder and danger.

The dichotomy between rural girl/servant-prostitute embodies the contradictions and the struggles of national identity. It is a dichotomy that represents the dilemma "What is Greece? East or West?"[8] The reality of the Greek state and the "backwardness" of Greek society in relation to the idealized model of the West produced this dilemma whether Greece belongs to East or West. The notion of the East encompassed the negative associated with the Greek state in contrast to the West. Moreover, the contradictions within Greek society, between a Europeanized urban middle class and the peasants had to be reconciled. The invention of the "people" [*laos*] as the "ark of Hellenic civilization" and identity through the centuries became the explanatory model for the continuity of the Greek nation but also reconciled these contradictions, i.e., modernization (whose bearer was the middle class) with tradition (whose bearer were the people).[9] Yet, although Europe was the model of development, European attitudes were a source of immorality. It was the "people", that is the peasants, who were the bearers of a culture whose sources were to be found in ancient Greece. This consciousness was "asleep" waiting to be "reawaken" as the peasants "ignored" their bond

---

[7] Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, pp. 33-49.

[8] Markos Renieris, "What is Greece?", *Eranistis*, 1942.

[9] See, Alexis Politis, *Ideologies kai nootropies stin Ellada, 1830-1880* [Ideologies and mentalities in Greece 1830-1880], University lectures, 1989-1990, pp. 50-51.

with ancient Greeks. As Spyridon Zambelios wrote in 1856: "Two social elements, two elements that can save our nation emerge from inertia and endorse immediately the struggle; both being for years idle; the PEOPLE and WOMAN. Only Greece is young".[10] The institutional discourses on domestic servants communicate with folklore studies: for both, the "popular" is identified with the peasant. Furthermore, both combined voyeurism and pedagogy and both were gendered. The figure of the servant-prostitute encompassed the contradictions between the modern and traditional, the urban and rural. The body of the rural girl who becomes servant who becomes prostitute is a metonymy for the nation itself. In this light, the violation of the woman's body was a violation of the nation; the purity of the woman was a prerequisite for the purity of the nation and for the preservation of national consciousness. It was above all the servant who either as an immigrant or an internal migrant encompassed these contradictions between the rural (as an eternal presence) and the urban, and it is in the moment of transition -- when "the popular" seizes to exist -- that it acquires its full presence.

In agreeing also on the need to police these women, the ambassador and the mayor diverge in regard to the measures that should be undertaken for ensuring their protection. The ambassador proposed the elimination of migration of young women, while the mayor took into account the poverty and the social conditions of the rural families in the islands argues that prohibiting migration would have deprived families of their only means of survival. Instead, he proposed to place migrant women under the guardianship of their compatriots while the migrant community acted as police. As we shall see, these local networks of controlling women existed in Athens in the twentieth century and were very successful in ruling women's lives.

In the books of the Graikikon Hospital of Epta Pyrgoi in Constantinople the registration of patients began in 1833, while in 1836 their age was recorded and in 1839 the diagnosis was also included. After 1847, a more systematic registration had been maintained, which included the date of entrance, the duration of illness before entering the hospital, place of origin, profession, marital condition, residence in Constantinople and ethnicity of the patient. In 1863 the doctor A. G. Paspatis published a book based on the registers of the hospital in which he analyzed the mortality rate of the Orthodox population who entered the hospital in relation to their profession, working conditions, living conditions, place of origin, gender, residence as well as the form of migration. The thorough description of the working and living conditions of

---

[10]Spyridon Zambelios, quoted in ibid, p. 50. Spyridon Vasileiadis also wrote in 1873: "The imprisoned but immortal people, contemned as vulgar were rescued, [...] remained pure and immaculate, were neither latinised or turkified, but preserved intact and in purity the blood, mind, feelings and morals. Ibid., p. 51.

the Orthodox population in Constantinople and his method of looking into these conditions in order to explain the status of health of the population suggests that Paspatis was familiar with the studies in Western Europe on the poor. Paspatis constructed a social geography of the city through the residential distribution of the population and the location of workshops as well as the ethnic composition of districts.

Concerning the women who entered the hospital, he wrote: "The majority of women who are hospitalized in the Hospital are domestic servants originating from the islands of Greece. Many of them end up in the brothels of Galatas and Stavrodromi [districts of Constantinople] *from where they are collected and are sent for treatment in the establishment*".[11] Yet, the Patriarchate used the hospital as a penitentiary too: "Fallen women are enclosed in the hospital for reformation from the Patriarchate as a compromise or punishment".[12]

Female Domestic Servants in the hospital of Epta Pyrgoi in Constantinople

Origin	Entered	Exited	Died	Percent
European part of the Ottoman empire	121	90	25	21.72
Anadolu	52	42	7	14.25
Islands	88	63	23	25.75
Greece	410	282	122	30.20
Ionian islands	12	11	1	-
Total	683	488	178	26.50

Source: Paspatis, *Graikikon Nosokomeion*, p. 169

> I shall attempt to explain the high mortality of this table: I am saying that many women who are entering the hospital as servants, they are debauched from the brothels of Galatas and Stavrodromio. Most of these women went astray to this way of life due to sexual seduction and laziness. Malicious old women, called *pratriai* [procurers], go from house to house and excite the gullible fantasies of women and they trap them using as a bait gold and adornment. Not only they leave from the houses they serve but they also end up to these *pratriai* and through them they are sent to other houses. In the houses of the *pratriai* these young servants loose their money and virginity. Greek women fall more than any other category of women, because as they are far away from the beneficial surveillance of their parents, they are circumscribed by and walk around with numerous so-called relatives. *Those who lead an unruly and rough life are*

[11] A. G. Paspatis, *Peri tou Graikikou nosokomeiou ton Epta Pirgon*, Athens 1863, p. 167.
[12] Paspatis, p. 15.

> *always short-lived.* Although the majority of domestic servants come from the islands of Cyclades in which the health of inhabitants is not disturbed from indigenous trouble, their mortality is much higher than that of any other category. I have to confess that plenty of times I was shocked with the negligence of employers in everything that concerns the health of their servants, especially the females. For many of them [employers] it is considered cold and inappropriate to send the ill domestic servant to the Hospital. They are kept in a tiny and stuffy room without any medicine and a doctor, for the first period of their illness. They are deprived of the usual attention of the healthy towards the ill person that relieves but also very often cures without any further help. Their fellow servants avoid them and their masters are bored. Finally, there are brought to the hospital, victims of their masters blameworthy negligence, where they die. Very often, as soon as they get ill, they are expelled from the house of their employers and tortured from their illness enter the hospital, wishing to die in order to be relieved. I write these words in order all of us to be aware. If with a scientific research like this on the health and death of our compatriots, we can benefit our lot, then the present study will be more fruitful and our behaviour towards our servants more consonant to Christian principles. Religious doctrine clearly orders to care for the health of the servants in our house. [...] What I wrote about female servants explains their higher mortality. It is 26.66% compared to that of 16.41% for males. [...] Men are free to leave the homes in which they serve in order to be treated in the hospital. The number of female servants without any visitors in the hospital is so big compared to that of male servants that proves without any doubt the blameworthy negligence of employers towards their female servants.[13]

A dual discourse on domestic servants was developed by Paspatis. This was a discourse addressed to the employers with the aim to enlighten and educate them with regard to their duties towards their servants. The pedagogical aim and paternalistic tone draw their legitimacy from the "scientific" and Christian credentials of Paspatis' project. The first facet of this discourse is moralistic: mortality is a punishment for sin. The desire for luxury, gold and adornment, leads young servants to prostitution and prostitution leads to disease and death. Deprived of the surveillance of their parents, they are put under the surveillance of the Patriarchate, which treats the hospital as a penitentiary and reformatory institution. There is an implied blame put to employers for neglecting their Christian duty of caring for their servants' conduct.

The second facet of Paspati's discourse concerns the employers more directly. The high mortality rate of servants is attributed to the working conditions of domestic servants and thus to the negligence of employers. Here the "statistical facts" combined with an inquiry into the working conditions of servants and their treatment by employers render scientific claims to the

---

[13] Paspatis, p. 169 [my emphasis].

discourse. The gendered imbalance of mortality illustrates that fewer female servants entered the hospital than men. As the hospital was used as a penitentiary for prostitutes, it is probable that employers were cautious about sending female servants due to its ill reputation. Yet, as we shall see from religious conduct literature addressed both to employers and servants and from the interviewees' experiences, servants' illnesses were disregarded by employers as setting at risk their financial interests. The employers' neglect for servants' illness was a structural feature of the subordinate position of servants in the middle-class household.

It seems that domestic servants were an easy target for agencies that were disguised under the form of servant agencies or combined both activities by placing servants and placing prostitutes. In the Police reports of 1874 in Alexandria the activities of a registry office are described as follows:[14]

> Panajiotis Lazarettos from Kithira resident with his wife at [?] in a shop in the suburb of [?] near the Military Station and practising the agent of domestic servants. If a young servant is, for example, in a good house and appears for a while at the window and by chance is seen by a malicious man, he immediately goes to Panajiotis and makes a deal with him and his wife to bring the young woman into their house. Then Panajiotis sends his wife to the house in which the maiden [*kori*] lives and with a million flattering and suave manners convinces her to resign from domestic service because she [the agent] will place her in a better post with a double salary. When she brings her to consent she says to her to be patient for a few days until she finds her a more profitable post.
>
> During this period the malicious man who first saw the young woman at the window and fell for her, continuously frequents in the house of the agent scandalized by the maiden and at last he promises her that he will marry her in order to succeed his purpose to seduce her.
>
> When he succeeds, he stays for a small period with her and afterwards he abandons her, so the young woman is obliged to become a prostitute. All these vile activities of Panajiotakis are known to everybody in Alexandria and attach blame to the honourable Greek colony.
>
> The woman A. K., who was expelled two days ago with her lover, confessed at the Passport office before Panajiotakis that he himself and his wife are the cause for abandoning the house in which she was a servant and for her current state. Besides, the other woman Sofia from Mytilini, who was also expelled with A., when she saw him, pounced upon him and gripped him by the throat crying out: "You creep, you are the corrupter of all the [?] young girls". When his highness Ahmet Pasa Dramali was on duty as Policeman of Alexandria, all the thieves he arrested, confessed to his highness that the above Panajiotakis received earrings, rings and jewellery from the women he supplied. Then I was ordered to go in the evening to his house and after an investigation we found many stolen goods, as the thieves had confessed, which

---

[14] *Ypourgeion Eksoterikon, Astinomia, Dimosia Asfaleia* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Police, Public Security] Folder 98/2, 30 May 1874.

> we took to the Police station together with Panajiotis. He was imprisoned for a long period, until the interpreter of the Greek consulate K. V. Tzouridis took his promise [of Panajiotis] that within fifteen days he would leave together with his wife. In the meantime, Ahmet Pasa was seized, I was positioned in Ismailia and in this way the whole thing was silenced. Panajiotakis is a person of vile conduct and as such he should not stay in our city, as he attaches blame to our honourable Greek colony. [...]
>
> Panajiotis Lazaretos stole the clothes and furniture of the three women who were expelled two days ago. [...]
> The policeman Minias.

The police report constitutes to an extent a narrative of sexual danger, yet it draws elements from not so much from the melodramatic imagination but from the fairy tale. The setting is not as fixed and familiar as it is in melodrama. Although we get information about Panajiotis residence, which is also the location where seduction takes place, this information is a requirement of an official document. The first scene of the narrative reminds us of the timeless "once upon a time" of the fairy tale. The young beautiful (the evil man falls for her) woman in the window and the absolute distinction between the good policeman and the evil man (also good house and dangerous/destructive house) are also elements of the folk fairy tale. Gold, like earrings, rings and necklaces found by the goody hero, the policeman, and the capture of the villain leads us to the wish-fulfilling ending of the fairy tale. On the other hand, the narrative is fueled by the plot of the melodrama: the "maiden" who becomes a "woman" through rape is also the innocent girl who becomes victim of a villainous man. The victims are fallen women who are scorned by society while the seducer went unpunished.[15] Like the melodrama, it says the truth out loud. Furthermore, the desire to return to a previous state of innocence (identified by the honourable Greek colony) is what distinguishes the melodrama from other genres.

II. Consumption

In popular press as well as in socio-economic studies it is common for the past to be viewed as an idyllic place where social relationships were rendered unproblematic and serene. That the past has to be idealized in order the present to be castigated is a common literary trope. Whenever the press paid attention to the "servant problem" or the "crisis of the apron"[16], either in the 1880s, 1930s, 1950s, or even today, the recent past is perceived as unproblematic in

---

[15] Harris, Ruth, "Melodrama, Hysteria and Feminine Crimes of Passion in the Fin-de-Siècle", *History Workshop Journal*, no. 25, 1988, p. 44.
[16] Pavlos Nirvanas, "*Metathesis enallax*", *Estia*, 31 August 1926.

relation to a problematic present. The regularity of this pattern when we enter what Raymond Williams called "the escalator moving across time" is an important clue to historical perspective. However, the successive resting places of the past have some actual significance when they are analyzed in their own terms.[17] In late nineteenth century, the contrast between the country and the city talks about the contamination of an unchanged pastoral past which is also present (and this is because of the need for continuity in national identity and the newness of the Greek nation-state) was inscribed in the body of the rural girl.

> A few young women, their number fortunately decreases, daughters of poor peasants bored [*varintheisai*] of their country's poor life change it for the life of the city, which they describe, after having experienced it, with the nicest colours, prefer to live abroad as servants and to acquire a small sum through which they built up their dowry or remedy their needs. We consider these migrations very damaging for the young girls and we think that instead of leaving their homeland to go to other places where different customs than those in their homeland exist and habits completely different, they could help parents and brothers in light jobs [...] Thus it is necessary that not only authorities but everybody who seeks his homeland's welfare should divert these young girls from migration, indicating the results of this habit [ethos], of which the effect is the dissolution of family bonds and the introduction of luxury. And since the discourse is about luxury, we thing that we shouldn't conceal that luxury has started to strengthen or, more accurately, has already strengthened its roots in the small island. Its introduction not only facilitates the migration of the young girls of peasant class but the import of money in the island, a lot of which is spent in the land. Apart from those young girls of the peasant class who never migrated, all the rest -apart from a very small number- are dressed in fashionable mode and accommodate to the changing innovations of fashion. Valuable furniture -relatively for a small island- adorn the rooms of the gentry's houses and expensive jewellery of modern art adorn the hands and the chests of wives and daughters of the gentry. For the elimination of luxury it is necessary the higher class to act as good examples for the lower classes. Because when this does not happen the less wealthy class, when imitates the example of the wealthy one, faces financial difficulties due to luxury.[18]

The discourse on luxury was one of the most dominant and long standing discourses. It extended from the last quarter of the nineteenth century throughout the first half of the century. The mass-production of cheap consumer goods in the urban centres of the Ottoman empire fuelled by urbanization led to a change in the patterns of consumption which were not confined to the middle-class but to a broader spectrum of the population. However, it was not only clothing, but also mirrors, printed paper, and new clothing fabrics which became common in the islands. Consumption for the middle classes, as Maxine Berg argued, "conveyed protocol

---

[17] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, London, 1973, p. 12.

and a sense of belonging". A wide range of registers was embedded in the conception of goods. In European markets regional differences in tastes and diversity in goods demonstrating class distinction co-existed with the expansion of mass produced goods.[19] Clothes expressed individuality and marked status differences. In nineteenth-century Greece, clothes did not only mark status difference but were registers of national identity.[20]

In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses on domestic service, the city was constructed as a dangerous and corrupt place, which threatened to erase the purity and morality of rural girls as opposed to an idealized pastoral space. Rural life and customs constituted the essence of Greekness, while the Western civilization which was embodied in manners, dressing etc. undermined national identity and the stability of the Greek state. Domestic service, the most prevalent form of female rural-to-urban migration in the late nineteenth century, was part of the modernization process.

The servant became the symbol of the transformation of Greekness.[21] It spoke the advent of a materialist culture, a new form consumption oriented towards products and goods and the introduction of new habits that threatened to erase traditional lifestyles. The figure of the servant incorporated the historical dimension, it serves to write the past into the present, for the peasant girl represents the condensed and frozen past which is threatened by her transformation into the servant in the city.

In the twentieth-century discourses, the peasant girl was the metonym of the pure, of the natural and the innocent, of the naive and the childlike, which was transformed through domestic service into the dangerous labouring classes of the city:

> Dear Hellinis,
> Why don't you undertake the war against luxury, of this bad guide which plagues our society. You are the only feminine magazine that caters for female

---

[18] Zafeirios Gavalas, *Folegandros*, Athens 1886, p. 27-28.

[19] Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain*, London, Routledge, 1994 (2nd edition), p. 132.

[20] For the use of consumption to make claims to the legitimacy of the nation and of clothes and fashion as central factors in political arguments and claims to legitimacy see, David Kuchta, "The Making of the Self-Made Man: Class, Clothing, and English Masculinity, 1688-1832", in Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough (eds.), *The Sex of Things, Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, California, University of California Press, pp. 65-70

[21] The servant figure talks about two to a large extent simultaneous processes: the urbanization of countryside and the ruralization of the city; See, Paul Sant-Cassia and Constantina Bada, *The Making of the Modern Greek Family: Marriage and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Athens*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 235-6. Rural migration was a key factor for the growth of cities and, as A. Simic points out, "brought about the peasantization of urban centers". Quoted in ibid., p. 235. As Cassia and Bada argue, we have to redefine our concept of "urban" as not strictly referring to a place that is called city or town. Some customs that we identify as rural evolved within the city as a response to urban way life which eventually transformed rural customs. "In many ways the city acts to reinforce what are presumed to be rural customs"; ibid., p. 255.

> soul; can't you save this soul that is like a rolling stone? How did it happen and the simplicity and modesty women and girls started to disappear? Until recently, we were used to wear mules. Now even servants refuse to wear them. I met six years ago a young rural girl, who came from a village to work as a servant in a family. She was dressed with breeches, spencer, she was barefoot wearing only thick socks, with a part in the middle and two tight pony tales and kerchief on the head. She did not know how to climb stairs because they did not have stairs.
> I met her again in the same house, where she was still a servant, wearing a silk dress, fashionable shoes, short sleeves, her neck uncovered, with a winter hat that cost 300 drachmas and a summer hat that cost 150 drachmas. I did not recognize her! The stream comes uncontrollable, destructive.[22]

The servant's body and appearance were firmly fixed in the social topography. Goods are signs of social status associated with specific occupations and class fractions. Arjun Appadurai argued that things have a social life and that following the paths of commodities and their diversions is illuminating to understand the changes in the social role of objects. The items described in the above excerpt and their consumption by the lower classes can be considered as illustrations of what Appadurai termed "diversion of commodities from preordained paths"[23], that is their function to bestow status upon the new middle class. The diversion of commodities from these customary paths carries a morally ambiguous aura because they lose their discriminatory value and thus they pose a threat to the demarcation of class differences, a threat that is coded in the statement: "I did not recognize her". The debate over luxury was a focal point in feminist discourses in the inter-war period and exposed the middle-class females' understanding of their unique social mission.[24]

The intersection of the discourse between luxury and the servant reflects not only the new consumption attitudes of the urban population but also the transformation of the servant population. Domestic service witnessed a dramatic fall in the inter-war period and the supply of servants from the refugee population transformed patterns of service employment. The refugee population exchanged factory work with domestic service as opposed to the rural population and thus constituted a much more volatile workforce. Although female wages were low, there were indications for an upward trend especially after 1928.[25] The strategic position of working-class females at the intersection of reproduction, production and consumption

---

[22] Elpiniki Saranti, "Correspondence", *Ellinis*, p. 243.
[23] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value", in Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge University Press 1986, p. 26.
[24] Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman*, p. 142.
[25] G. B. Dertilis and Al. Frangiadis, "The great landmarks of Greek economy", *Tachidromos*, special issue, 23 December 1999, p. 50.

created anxiety to the middle-class.[26] The debate over the consumption attitudes of rural domestic servants in the late nineteenth century was based on the threat it entailed to Greek identity. In the interwar period, the debate over luxury and its intersection with working-class women was transformed into a class-based discourse. This discourse reflected the new consumption attitudes of the working-class population due to their central position in production and consumption. It was not only these attitudes, which involved desires and aspirations condemned by the middle class, but also the key position of working-class women as an industrial workforce both in the production and consumption of goods that met the fierce response of the press.

The fact that the social status of oneself was obscured due to dressing was extremely upsetting for middle-class women who had to distinguish themselves from servants in the social space of middle-class house. "Consumption", as Appadurai argued, "is eminently social, relational, and active, rather than private, atomic and passive".[27] Appadurai proposed to regard luxury goods as goods "whose principal use is rhetorical and social, goods that are simply incarnated signs".[28] Luxury is a special "register" of consumption rather than a special class of thing. The author of the letter claimed in the name of female collectivity the need for "social regulation of the desire for goods"[29] setting the criteria of appropriateness. By this claim middle-class women assigned themselves the task to intervene into social life and control the working-class body.

What thus changed in the 1920s is that the contrast between the country and the city became a class-based discourse. It was the female rural migrant embedded in the country and city contrast which was made use by a reactionary discourse against democracy, the labour movement and aspiration. In 1929, in the newspaper *Evdomas*, Dolis Nikvas writes about the changes that occurred in domestic service in the 1920s. The unspecified reference of time is indicative of his attempt to idealize the past:

> Once it was enough for someone to ask for a slave (*doula*)-excuse me servant- and immediately the next day you had ten knocking the door begging you to be hired. Once it was enough to go to a registry office and to encounter a bundle of them so you could choose according to your own tastes and to take one back home. Providing her with cooked food, a mattress and one-two hundred drachmas were enough to have as many as you wanted of them... Yes, in the

---

[26] About the impact of the association between women and consumption, production and reproduction in the industrial revolution, see Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*, pp. 116-135.
[27] Ibid., p. 31
[28] Ibid., p. 38
[29] Ibid., p. 30.

> past one had ...a slave. But today everything has changed and continues to change day after day for the worse. And amongst all the rest the slave changed. First of all this lady became Miss Servant. [...] The kerchief of the Andriotissa slave was transformed all of the sudden, miraculously, into a hat –her mistress's cast-off garment- later into a cute hat bought from a little store in Athinas street, and later into a smart hat, handmade and ordered from Ermou street or Agiou Markou, often from the same shop where the mistress goes for shopping. [...] And now that her outlook changed, that Miss Servant cannot be distinguished from the mistress, a new reformation had to take place. One progress determined the next [...] We want a separate room, with air, sun, electricity, to have a window on the road or garden, spacious. We want it perfectly furnished. Bed with bedspring, enough linen. Mattress of good quality cotton, of feather if its possible, sink of marble, toilet, wardrobe, chair, armchair, electric bulb, bedside table. As for the face-powder, cosmetics, lipstick these should not be necessarily included in the demands, because they are usually shared with the mistress [...] Then the food comes. It has to be excellent, abundant and according to her tastes, in the morning to have necessarily their milk and butter and in the afternoon tea with marmalade.[30]

In the above quotation, the relationship between commodities, women and class distinction became intertwined. Clothes became the texture of political discourse which demonstrated the cultural complexities of consumption and the dilemmas of desire in societies in change. As Appadurai argues, "Consumption is subject to social control and political redefinition".[31] The "new servant" was the symbol of modernization of Greek society. The development of the market economy, and the democratization of social relationships (the contribution of the labour movement and labour legislation is implicit here) account for the loss of the previous paradise in the mistress-servant relationship. The rural girl without demands who was treated like a slave is transformed in the city into a symbol of modernization. Sumptuary laws which set parameters for taste and consumption and acted "as consumption-regulating devices, prescribing which groups consume which good and what type of clothing are under strong threat from a major upsurge in the number and the availability of commodities".[32] The primary reason for the transformation of the servant-mistress relationship was the access of working-class women to commodities. Class struggle, the demand for better living and working conditions, was a product of the changing spending attitudes of women, of the democratization in consumption. It was the access to commodities that challenged class differences. New types of commodity consumption and leisure activities were linked to the

---

[30] *Evdomas*, 26 January 1929.

[31] Appadurai, "Introduction", p. 6.

[32] Appadurai quoted in Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Post-moderninsm*, London, Sage Publications, 1991, p. 17.

proliferation of identities which challenged the symbolic order and social space of bourgeois society.[33] The transformation of domestic servant that Nikvas described as wearing a kerchief, to a hat that is the mistress's cast-off hat, to a cheap replica of the mistress's hat, to the identical hat was a process that not only undermined the belonging to a class community as it led working class women not only to "pass" for middle class but also to *feel* like middle class. Homi Bhabha wrote about the disruptive quality of mimicry, the look of surveillance which returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined.[34] Moreover, the construction of the servant as a mimic representation of a mistress disturbed the truthfulness and existence of a real because it shows that power hides no essence, no "itself". Yet, what worried more in consumption and in passing as middle class was that it promoted a feeling of desiring and deserving middle-class status. Desire was perceived as the driving force of class struggle.

The idea that the close relationship between classes promoted class envy and antagonism can be found in various long-standing normative discourses though their use and meaning changed. In the 1920s solutions were sought in Western European models in order to deal with the working-class movement:

> Responding to the document of your Excellency through which provision of information related to the labour movement abroad is asked. [...] As for the settlement of labourers, I consider my duty to inform you about the visit I paid with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Karnebeek to the suburb constructed by the Government in which there were built small houses -in exchange of meagre weekly rent- with public gardens and various types of recreation so that the working classes confining themselves to their immediate environment avoid mixing (*sichrotismo*) with the wealthier classes, whose life can provoke envy as well as spending out of vain in useless, for the working-class, goods.[35]

Class envy and the desire for goods were in fact perceived as a serious political threat and used as political arguments. The remedy proposed, as we saw in the above quotation, was class segregation. This was not possible in the case of domestic service. Hence the obsession with their consumption attitudes.

The fear of the erasure of boundaries constructed domestic servants as in-between figures attributing to them an imitative subjectivity. Popular representations of domestic servants depicted them as lesser others of middle-class housewives. Both the popular press and film have treated female domestic servants as caricatures of middle-class females in terms of

---

[33] Victoria de Grazia, "Empowering Women as Citizen-Consumers, in *The Sex of Things*, p. 283.

[34] Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man" in *The Location of Culture*, p. 90.

[35] Ipourgeion Exoterikon [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Letter of Kapsambekis to the Minister of Foreign Affairs N. Politis, Folder 42/2,2, The Hague, 24/8 March 1920.

dressing, speech, and aspirations. As White and Stallybrass point out, body images "speak" social relations.[36] The servant's body was structured as a grotesque body versus the classificatory body of the mistress. One of the most popular figures of domestic servants in film (Despoina Stylianopoulou) encapsulated the failure to achieve true middle-classness and simultaneously true womanhood.[37] Speech and the use of language were used to produce comic effects, but they also encoded the mimicry of the self. The language she used was a mixture of the vernacular and *katharevousa* (the neo-Classical form of the modern Greek language) with a profound rural accent. Her body was an androgynous body, which always contrasted with the delicate figure of the mistress.

III. Servants as a Danger for the Middle-Class Family

1.1 Physical and Cultural Danger

Servants were perceived as physically and morally dangerous for middle class families. Physical danger was connected with disease while moral danger was connected with delinquency, namely prostitution and theft. It was the working class family that was rendered responsible for all these evils. Servants were considered dangerous for children because they transmitted diseases brought from their families. For professionals and state agents who participated in the discussion on social policy, disease was linked to poverty and ignorance, which in turn led to corruption. The advice given to mothers by a Konstantinos Saroglou, General Secretary of the Patriotic Institution, in the form of the letter, a typical form of the conduct literature, is instructive:

> At first sight she looked the way servants look. As far as her hereditary background is concerned, her father had died from a cold. Her brother had contracted consumption in the army and was sent back home in order to transmit the disease easier. The servant, as she claimed, was constantly ill and coughed because she spent all her day doing the washing, constantly wet, and sweating due to the heavy loads she carried. Under careful examination, it was revealed that the cold was far-gone consumption, which she transmitted to the child at her ease and convenience. You can see how careful should you be in the selection of domestic personnel, and especially of those who will be in close contact with your child.[38]

---

[36] Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p.10

[37] "Gender systems operate to normalize standards of femininity which are necessary for the replication of gender based relations of domination. All women fail to meet these standards but we fail in different ways and degrees. Relations of domination *among* women are reinforced by these standards and our varying allegiances to them, since many women lack class, race, heterosexual or other privileges necessary to (almost) meet the stipulated standard of 'true' womanhood"; Flax, *Multiples*, p. 40.

The ironic tone of the letter and the disbelief in the servant's own account of her illness serve to close off the hard conditions of the servant labour (heavy work and the exposure to cold) as the cause of consumption as well as to enhance the claims for expertise on the part of doctors. Working class families were seen as responsible for the transmission of disease while middle class families were in need of medical care and advice. By drawing attention to the family background and by representing the family as a deteriorated race and the middle-class family in danger, doctors justified their intervention into the working-class family, and made their intervention into both working-class and middle-class families indispensable for the welfare of the child.

The introduction of a health booklet for servants was proposed on the ground of preventing the transmission of disease by servants. Aristotelis Koutsoumaris argued that if servants were provided with a health booklet "one could feel safe about the health of his children. Today, if someone employs a girl from a register office does not know what can happen to him". He recited a case that reached the Branch for Morals in 1927. Two sisters, who were 14 and 16 years old, worked as servants in the house of a lieutenant-colonel who admitted that he kept two servants but he did not give them any salary as he had them as foster children. He expelled them from the house without giving them any money with the excuse that their conduct annoyed him. Koutsoumaris sent them to Sygrou hospital for a medical examination in which it was found that they had syphilis:

> When they left from the house they served because they suffered from the mistreatment, they fell in the hands of exploiters who corrupted them and then they placed them in confectioneries, breweries etc. and they led them to absolute corruption [...] Imagine the tremendous danger would be for the house if they employed them without previously being examined by the doctor.[39]

In the above narrative two discourses intersected, the fear of contamination of the middle-class family and the construction of domestic service as a step towards prostitution that led to the identification of domestic servants with prostitutes. The medical examination for venereal disease or sexual intercourse of working boys and girls, such as of boys in the barges of the port of Piraeus or in Larissis railway station as well as of girls found by the police wandering in the street or who committed theft as well as of the girls who were enclosed in the reformatory school was one of the practices of state control over working-class children and of

---

[38] Konstantinos Saroglou, "Letter to a mother", *To Paidi*, (Organo tou Pikpa) no. 54, May 1939, p.5.

[39] Koutsoumaris, " The life and exploitation of little female servants... ", p. 203.

their construction as dangerous and, thus, as in need of discipline and reform.[40] Moreover, the introduction of the booklet of servants issued by the police, which was done on the premise of eliminating servants' criminality, reinforced the connection between prostitution and domestic service. As Koutsoumaris argued, the introduction of the personal booklet was not implemented because "it gives the impression of something reprehensible, given that the same authority issued the booklets of women of reprehensible morals".[41] It was not only domestic servants but also workers in different sectors who perceived the introduction of the health book as a measure serving the interests of the middle-classes. The statement of Nikolaos Papadopoulos, confectioner, enters the core of the debate on labour legislation:

> Firstly, the health book poses crudely in front of us the workers the fact that today's middle class is interested only in itself, for its own health while it is indifferent for the whole society.[...] For us the workers there is only one solution: Better sanitary conditions, abolition of unsanitary factories and better food and payment.[42]

The popular press reproduced the ideas of contamination of the middle-class family by servants. For all of the diseases of the middle-class house it was servants who were rendered responsible. They became the repositories of everything that constituted the dark side of the middle class such as disease, dirt, and misbehaviour of children.

> Even if it looks strange for a house with a good housewife to have flees, this can happen either because the house happens to be old or because some servant transfers these annoying insects.[43]

Servants did not only contaminate children physically but also culturally. Doctors emphasized to mothers that their children ran the risk of taking after their servants and advised them to supervise servants in the care of children closely.

> If the wet nurse is often dangerous for the child because of the diseases she bears, she is a hundred times more dangerous because of the moral effect she can have on the infant. I have frequently heard people saying that the child resembles its nurse and I have seen people laughing against those who believe such things. But it is, in fact, a very serious matter. The child imitates those who are in close contact and its first pedagogues is, naturally, the mother or,

---

[40] See the statistics and the investigation conducted by the police according to which "out of 1,105 children who had been enclosed in Averof prison [Efivion] 95% were found after their examination by the doctor with traces of passive homosexuality before their entrance in the institution"; Koutsoumaris, "Social welfare for the protection...", pp. 29-30; For the examination of girls in the reformatory school see, Ioannis Vergopoulos, "Vagrancy, mendacity, and prostitution of juveniles", *To Paidi*, no. 56, July 1939, p. 19.

[41] Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation of little female servants... ", p. 203.

[42] Nikolaos Papadopoulos, "The health booklets", *Sosialistiki Zoi*, no. 32, June 1931, p. 333.

[43] *Evdomas*, 11, 23 December 1927, p. 213.

unfortunately, the uneducated wet nurse.[44]

Wet-nurses and governesses have been castigated for their devastating influence to the moral and physical health of children since the nineteenth century by early feminists. However, they also served as vehicles for the education of the middle-class housewife by exemplifying the negative attitudes and characteristics that a middle-class woman should remove. Their use as the examples of what a housewife should avoid was an indirect way to instill to middle-class women the lessons of the good housewifery. The title of the article "Do we have mothers?" in the *Efimeris ton Kirion* illustrated that it was middle-class women who held prime responsibility for the moral conduct and the physical health of their children:

> The young Greek mother assigns the infantile education of her child to the first upstart fortune-hunter wet-nurse provided that her milk is nutritious and later to the elderly recalcitrant and malicious governess. As for the children's education you trust your innocent daughter and young boy to the *gouvernante* who transmits not only her corrupted language but also her fertile semen of corruption and wickedness. [...] We beseech them if they care for their children's' well-being to change as much as they can these bad habits and in this way to benefit themselves, their family and polity. [45]

It was the language, the stories and the medical habits of servants that established the alieness and the alterity of the rural population and were used to amuse and humiliate servants in the representations of them in literature and in the press. However, it was the urban environment that corrupted the morals of both rural and urban girls in the debate about social disorder and delinquency. Hence, civil disorder, signified by theft and prostitution, came primarily out of the ranks of the urban poor, though the encounter of rural girls with the city and middle-class habits was assumed to be a path leading to demoralization and to the lack of innocence.

1.2 Theft and Prostitution

Theft

Servants personified the threat of civil disorder more than any other category of the working population. They were the figures which, because of the intimacy with the middle class and their important representation in the urban working population, personified the working class

---

[44] *To Paidi*, no. 1, May-June 1930, p. 14. Several articles castigated the wet-nurses: "Until her late days [Ifigeneia Siggrou] described the horrible surprises she experienced from the visits she paid [to the houses of wet-nurses who were hired by the Foundling House] and how many times she withdrew instantly the miserable infants from the unscrupulous wet-nurses after she founded them dirty, neglected, sick, dying sometimes and transported with her car to the foundling where they often died", K. Papageorgiou, "Ifigeneia Andreou Siggrou", *Ellinis*, nos. 4-5, 1921, p. 114.

and acted as a bridge in the discourses between the working class family and the state. Though the discourses on theft and prostitution dealt with different age groups, working class families remained the focus of concern and parents were blamed for negligent behaviour and economic exploitation of children and also for turning their offspring into criminals.

Olga Manou, using the statistics of the Ministry of Justice for the offences committed by women during the period 1925 to 1928, drew the conclusion that there was an increase in female criminality during the period. According to these data, theft comprised the largest proportion of convictions while servants represented the largest occupational category among the female offenders in the age group 16-30. The reasons for committing these offences were attributed to the demoralizing environment of the family, the lack of education and the desire for a luxurious life. Moreover, she has argued that many servants were pushed by their parents to commit theft against their employers and became professional thieves.[46]

Nevertheless, it seems that this was a misleading picture. Konstantinos G. Gardikas, Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Athens, stated that the manner in which statisticians defined the categories and the age cohorts of those convicted varied so much that it makes impossible their use for comparison with the pre-1926 period. A statistical elaboration of the data from the Ministry of Justice is only possible, though with limitations, for the 1926-1930 and 1933-1934 periods.[47] Gardikas argued that certain kinds of employment served as a pretence for committing crime. Contrary to what de Rykere argued for France, that the employment of the servant had become a source of criminality, Gardikas stated that according to the statistics of the Ministry of Justice only 1% of those who committed theft worked as domestic servants and those were professional thieves who used domestic service as a way to

---

[45] *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 1, p. 3.

[46] Olga Manou, "Female Criminality", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 83, 31 December 1928, p. 4

[47] K.G Gardikas, "To fylon kai I eglimatikotis" [The sex and criminality], *Sofronistikai Pliroforiai*, year 4, no. 2, 1939, pp. 85-102. During the period 1933-1934, 37% of females were convicted for insult, 18.7% for aggressive behaviour, and 13.1% for theft. 11.3 % of the total convicted for theft were women. While 18% of the females convicted were under 18 years old; ibid., p. 96. During 1933 61.1% of the total number convicted for theft in the age cohort 10-14 were males and 67.6% were females, 32.2% male and 30.6% female in the age 15-18. Besides, for the period 1928-1932 4% of those convicted for theft were between 10-14 years old and 17.8% were between 15-18. In 1933 3.2% (3.2 males and 3.1 females) of those committed theft were between 10-14, 15.8% (16.2 males and 12.6 females) between 15-18, 13.6% between 19-21 (14.2 males and 9.2 females), 30.7% (31.6 males and 24.3 females) between 22-30, 15.9% (15.6 males and 21.8 females) between 31-40. Thus the biggest concentration of females who committed theft is in the age category 22-40. In the same year, 10.5% of females who committed theft were in the age group 10-14, 8.8% in the age group 15-18, 7.5% in the age group 19-21, 8.7% in the age group 22-30, 15.2% in the age group 31-40, 17.2% in the age group 41-50, 14.8% in the age group 51-60 and 14.4% above 60 years old; K.G. Gardikas, "Age and Criminality", *Sofronistikai Pliroforiai*, year 4, no. 3, 1939, pp. 157, 159, 161.

enter houses.[48] The number of branded female criminals was 946 out of which 775 had committed theft, while 552 had committed theft in houses. 440 of them had committed theft under the pretence of service or with the quality of domestic servant.[49] The number of branded thieves who committed theft under the pretence of service was 350.[50]

Contemporaries separated servant theft into three categories. First, there was theft committed by servants in order to help their poor families. Secondly, there were those who under the pretence of service entered households with the aim of discovering where employers kept their wealth. Thirdly, there were those who occasionally detracted items from their employers. These categories were often blurred and servants were presented as being identical with professional thieves, while pilfering was seen as emanating from the desire for luxury. The police officer Spyros Paxinos in his book entitled *Crime, Police, and Society*, tried to make the distinction between those who chose service as a profession and those who belonged to a wider network of organized crime and used service as a pretext in order to commit theft.[51]

The anxiety about crimes committed against the employers' property informed not only the provisions issued by the police but also the whole idea of bringing domestic service under the police instead of labour legislation. As we have already seen, the reasoning used in the provisions was to impede those who used domestic service as a pretext for entering the middle-class house. Such cases occupied the press for months and were overwhelmingly presented in a sensational mode of narrative with the purpose of boosting their readership. Rather than being representative of the actual trends in service employment, they constituted modes of defining class otherness and had the effect of creating an image of servants as dangerous.

Theft committed by servants had multiple dimensions. Appropriating the master's property was a strategy of employees to compensate for the injustices of employers who did not pay their wages. In the minute-books kept by the Police Headquarters of Piraeus in 1945, "the judge of the Court of First Instance G. T. and magistrate of the 9th Magistracy sector of Piraeus lodged a complaint against the sailor of Royal Navy S.K. [...] for seducing his servant A. K. age, 25, ten days ago. The sailor positioned her in the house of his chief lieutenant commander. Before leaving secretly from the house of the magistrate, she appropriated clothes and food which belonged to her mistress. The magistrate lodged a complaint because of the disruption caused in his household due to the departure of the servant after three years in his

---

[48] K. G. Gardikas, "Professions and criminality", *To Paidi*, nos. 31-32, May-August 1935, pp. 9-10.
[49] Gardikas, "To fylon kai I eglimatikotis" [The sex and criminality], p. 96.
[50] Gardikas, "Professions and criminality", p. 10.
[51] Spyros Paxinos, *Eglima, Astynomia, Koinonia* [Crime, Police, Society], Athens 1940, p. 253.

service.[...] While I advised the magistrate to prosecute them, he denied and asked the police to bring before him the sailor and the servant. Called and presented in October 31, 1945 at 10:30 she returned the clothes and food while the magistrate paid her wages without having any further claim".[52] In the above incidence, the acquisition of food and clothes was performed by the employee to compensate for the withholding of wages. The exchange between wages and items before the police and the lack of prosecution as well as of any reference to theft in the police report illustrated that the removal of items was done as reparation for unfair treatment by employers. Furthermore, the statement by the magistrate about the unsettlement that the departure of the servant caused in his household implies that the meeting was pursued on the ground of convincing the servant to return to his house. Efstratios Fotiadis, senator and lawyer in Rethymnon of Crete, referred to several incidences of false persecution of servants by employers out of revenge for the departure of servants. He referred extensively to the case of an employer who in order to impede the departure of the servant employed in her house who had entered into a relationship and was planning to leave service accused both the servant and the fiancé of stealing her jewelry.[53] Several interviewees were also accused of theft without being persecuted out of revenge for their departure or in order to expel them when their services were no longer required. In a newspaper another incidence was reported of two servants who left their employer after taking clothes which were worth 1,000 drachmas as a reparation for the deprivation of wages.[54]

The pilfering of goods, especially food, has to be understood as a strategy of survival and as a perfectly legitimized activity by working-class community sharply distinguished from theft and perceived as an action to take pride in. The clear cut distinction between the items pilfered, such as food and coal, and those guarded and cared for, such as expensive textures and silver, demarcated the adherence to a rigid system of morality by the interviewees who worked as servants. The acquisition of such items was done in situations of crisis such as the war.

The discourse on theft was used extensively in the inter-war period for pedagogical and moralizing purposes. Theft performed by servants was linked to discourses on consumption and luxury that were both closely connected with representations of female subjectivity. Middle-class women were implicitly castigated for neglecting the role that society had

---

[52] Police Headquarter of Piraeus, Minute-book of the Police Headquarter of Piraeus, October 30, 1945.

[53] Efstratios Fotiadis, *I eglimatousa ginaika: Meleti psychologiki, koinoniologiki kai eglimatologiki*, Athens 1932, pp. 111-3.

[54] "Salary in kind", *Estia*, Friday 14 September 1934.

assigned to them, that of educating and moralizing the lower classes. Conspicuous material consumption, excessive appearance and luxurious life style were considered to present a negative paradigm to servants, its effects being the imitative behaviour of servants, appearance and aspirations above their rank, inappropriate demands in terms of settlement, food, clothes and wages, and finally unfulfilled desires for expensive items that drove them to theft, all of which undermined middle class authority and negated distinctions. Middle-class women's attitudes were presented as corrupting the morals and the pure and innocent mentality of the rural population in order for middle-class women to be warned of the risks they ran of losing their authority and also of the implications that prostitution and theft had for the social order.

> In the big urban centres children commit theft against their employers or in the shops in which they are employed. These cases are characteristic especially of little girls who work as domestic servants. And they are even more characteristic of those girls who left their village, tormented by poverty, in order to move to the city and serve various employers. They look like weak and restless butterflies captured by the blinding lights of the city and intoxicated by the richness of scents, enthusiastic by the rumours -all these producing thousands of desires. They leave their rough, rustic environment and they enter into aristocratic warm dwellings as servants. They encounter wardrobes full of clothes, shoes, underwear; bedrooms full of fragrances, silk stockings, rings, bracelets, and miraculous jewellery. Money is kept in a half opened drawer and it often occurs that they steal something. These girls of ignorance and poverty are trusted to safeguard wealth. Thus, the fact that they steal from time to time should not appear to us as something peculiar. What is strange is that some of these girls commit theft out of ideology: in order to send money to their parents in the village. Others decided to become professional thieves and exercise this profession successively to all the houses they serve. I will mention the case of a servant who managed to amass a small capital and lend money but eventually she was trapped because her last mistress who had borrowed all her money was more clever and sent her to the court.[55]

Prostitution

Women acting outside the family represented a threat of social tumult symbolized by prostitution. The connection between prostitution and single working-class women was so strong in the minds of contemporaries that girls, female-children and young women were presented as potential prostitutes. It was almost impossible to speak or write about working-class girls and girl labour without referring to prostitution. The terms girls and young women were used to indicate a state of not fully developed womanhood, which could be achieved solely through marriage and motherhood. Thus, girls had to be under the constant surveillance

---

[55] "When Children Start Stealing", *To Paidi (Organo tou PIKPA)*, no. 55, June 1939, p. 13.

and protection of the family and society in order to avoid slips that would endanger their marriageability.

Work was a threat to the moral integrity of working-class girls but it was also a necessity, because their earnings were important for the reproduction of the family: unemployment could easily lead girls to prostitution. "The young woman who works outside the house has a family dependent on her or at least relieves her poor family from the burden of keeping her. Does the Minister want to increase unemployment and prostitution in our country?"[56]

The argument was circular: The conditions of work led girls to prostitution and yet work was a means of avoiding prostitution. However, not all categories of female employment were considered to have destructive consequences for girls. Although 70% of the female working population worked in agriculture and cutlery, it was work in the urban centers that preoccupied society. The surveys about prostitution aimed at investigating the connection between prostitution and other forms of employment of the urban female population.[57]

In 1930, a survey inquiring into prostitution was conducted in Athens under the surveillance of Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, Director of the Department of Criminal Investigation between 1925-1932. The regulation of prostitution was allocated to police authorities in 1836 with the Royal Decree On Municipal Police under which the municipal police was authorized to repress acts that insulted morals and prohibited acts that encouraged the corruption of morals, and with two regulative ordinances 2506 and 2057 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 30th January 1856. Several decrees and circulars followed with which the system of *réglementation* was firmly established.[58] With the 3032 Act On the Measures for Combating Venereal Disease and on Indecent Women of 1922, it was committees in prefectures and no longer the police who were responsible for abolishing brothels and issuing permissions as well as for the characterizing a woman as "indecent". Between 1927 and 1933, 66 of the 74 brothels which existed in Athens closed down. In 1935, the system of *réglementation* was

---

[56] "Newsreel", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 161, Oct.-Nov. 1932, p. 7.

[57] "The environment, into which the girl enters either as factory worker or clerk in a shop or whatever, is nauseous. The older and more advanced are going to look after the young girl and with their teaching and paradigm will turn her to a moral and social rake. (...) Exploiting their psychic and physical weaknesses, the tendency for self exhibition which is cultivated by the luxurious and immoral post-war environment, the cruel poverty that haunts them and the inadequate education, they push them to corruption, they facilitate their destruction, and finally they constitute a threat for public health by transmitting terrible diseases"; G. N. Daskalakis, "Working girls", *Ergasia*, no. 24, 21-1-1930, p. 18.

[58] With the regulative ordinance On Brothels in 30 June 1856 and the circular of 11April 1894 On Common Women and Brothels of the Sanitary Direction of Athens and Piraeus as well as with the 25/9443 circular of the

enforced again. The 3310 Act of 1955 On combating venereal disease abolished the system of *réglementation.*

The aim of the investigation was to find out the social and economic background of the women who worked as prostitutes. It turned out that 17,3% out of 363 who worked as prostitutes had previously been servants, 17.1% had been industrial workers while 17.6% were seamstresses and 26% had been unemployed.[59] The investigation showed that besides the system of *réglementation* occasional prostitution was a means to supplement income. Unemployed women, women in occupations with high seasonal unemployment such as seamstresses domestic servants when out of employment had a high rate of participation in prostitution.

Another investigation was held by the police with regard to 325 women who were arrested by the police between 1926 and 1927 from places with a "suspicious reputation or surrendered by other authorities to the police in order to prevent them from slipping in corruption".[60] It turned out that 65.8% had been servants, while the rest had been workers, seamstresses and clerks or women who wandered in the streets of Athens without permanent residence looking for work, as well as women abandoned by their families. The second investigation had a preventive aim. Yet, this investigation was widely used to argue that the majority of prostitutes had worked earlier as domestic servants. In fact, the police gathered women who were homeless and their situation was, thus, considered as a step before prostitution. It is no surprising that the majority of those found wandering in the street were servants; internal migrants who did not have relatives in Athens or orphan children were also in a very difficult situation when they were out of employment.

The conclusion of both surveys was that women turned to prostitution out of economic distress and inadequate wages. The first investigation illustrated that the participation of domestic servants in prostitution was not higher compared to other types of employment. On the other hand, different authorities perceived service employment as a means of moralization and reformation of "fallen" women and girls. In an article written by Ioannis Vergopoulos, adviser in the department of prisons in the Ministry of Justice, the lack of provision for the rehabilitation of girls who had been in reformatory schools was highlighted. From his statement we gather that domestic service had been used as a form of rehabilitation for the

---

Ministry of Internal Affairs On the Way of Defining Common Women. All the above provisions had as a model the French Act of 19 July 1791 and the standing order of 15 October 1878.

[59] Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, *I ginaika thima tis somatemborias: Oi efthines tou kratous kai tis koinonias* [Women as victims of slave-traffic: The responsibility of the state and society], Athens 1963, p. 20.

inmates of reformatory institutions. "The moral reformation of girls has been more difficult than that of boys. Would it be adequate to position them in service in order to be under the protection of the family? But bearing in mind the existing conditions of service employment, this measure cannot be considered as rehabilitation".[61] This treatment was not a privilege of repressive institutions only. Other groups in society had sought to bring "fallen" women and girls back to order and had undertaken measures to prevent the moral consequences of service employment.

One of the preoccupations of national and international feminist organizations was the abolition of the system of prostitution and the moral conditions of working class population. Service employment was a site of action. The League of Nations established the Office for the Repression of Prostitution in 1923 and two years later Maria Svolou, labour inspector and president of the League for the Rights of Women, prepared the memorandum for the establishment of the office in Greece. The preventive measures of this organization involved the establishment of an office for the supervision of juvenile servants. The aim of this office was to take care of the mental and moral education of servants and to impede the seduction of servants by white-slave traders and their sexual exploitation in their recruitment. The measures consisted of a) the establishment of register offices supervised by women; b) the control of the existing agencies; c) the foundation of a Home for servants where they could stay until their recruitment; d) the booklet of labour to be provided not by the police but by the Office of Labour; e) the enforcement of the law of compulsory education to juvenile servants; f) the establishment of a separate service for the supervision of servants in order to prevent the expansion of prostitution.[62]

In March 1927 the Office was re-established and its aim was to introduce both preventive and repressive measures. The president was Lefki Iliou, the treasurer Maria Kritikou, the secretary Depoina Michailidou, the representative member of the Executive Committee was Kalliopi Pantermali, and Elli Apostolidou was the representative member of the General Secretary of the National Alliance of Women. The Office for the Repression of Prostitution established a branch called Branch of Social Morals. The preventive measures consisted of establishing *clubs* for pupils and working girls and boys either in schools or in philanthropic institutions in the refugee settlements of Athens (Dourgouti, Podarades,

---

[60] Ibid, p. 21.

[61] Ioannis Vergopoulos, "Reformatory Schools and reformatory treatment", *To Paidi*, no. 42, March-April 1937, pp. 26-27.

[62] "The League for the Repression of Prostitution", *Ellinis*, no. 5, May 1925, p. 104.

Kalograiza, Vyron) which were considered "fertile ground for [communist] propaganda".[63] The control of the young refugee population was planned to be exercised on the local level by a "committee of Ladies and Misses". Such a committee, which would be answerable to the Branch of Social Morals, was considered a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the moralization of the working-class population. Yet, such a committee could not be established in the poorest refugee settlements like Dorgouti, which had been designed as ghettos for the lowest strata of the refugee population. The Club for the Working Girl established by the Near East Relief Foundation in 1930 was an example of the endeavour to civilize working-class girls. Its administrative committee was composed of upper-class women, an implementation of the paternalism that purveyed such activities.

The repressive measures of the Branch of Social Morals consisted of the foundation of an asylum for "fallen" girls, sponsored by the state, "which apart from board and food [...] would provide employment as well as moral sermons in the manner of stories and a lending library. Besides, it will prepare them for exercising moral occupations. In this way, the Branch by advising and supervising fallen girls will make them virtuous and honest so that when they leave the asylum, they can be used in its factories where virtuous and honest women reside and where their presence would not set other women in danger. In this way their social and moral reconstitution will be complete. [...] But what is going to happen now that we do not have the above institutions? Should the repressive imperative of the Branch be abandoned? Of course not. The police Department of Morals informed the Branch that there are girls who had only fallen *once* and who regretted and would like to work as servants. The branch is eager to help them and promised to position them in families where the mistress can act as a moral advisor and valuable help. Unfortunately, families do not accept eagerly this kind of servants being afraid that they will relapse and tolerate harassment. Thus, enlightening and systematic work is required. For this purpose, the *asylum* is of absolute necessity because there they will find refuge and work and they will be instructed to avoid *luxury*, this horrible plague and the enemy of morality. In this way they will be moralized and return to order".[64] Yet in the Accounting Report of the National Council of Greek Women of 1931, the establishment of the Branch of Social Morals had not been achieved.[65]

Register offices for servants were an issue that preoccupied the inspectors due to the moral questions it raised for servants. Anapliotis, the chief inspector, stated that nine register

---

[63] Lefki Iliou, "Branch of Social Morality", *Ellinis*, no. 11, November 1927, p. 226.
[64] Ibid., p. 227.

offices existed, which placed female servants in private houses in Athens. Three of them kept books while six did not. According to the numbers they gave, they placed 165 wet-nurses with a monthly salary of 120-150 drachma and food, 798 female servants with salary 50-90 drachma, and 324 male servants with a salary between 30-100 drachma.[66] Anapliotis suggested the establishment of state registry offices for servants, because servants were not organized in unions which undertook the positioning of their members in employment (such as servants of hotels, restaurants, bakeries, ships, and chauffeurs), and of rigid criteria for those individuals who wanted to act as servant agents. It was well known that the servant agencies functioned as covers for prostitution. Maria Svolou appealed for the substitution of the existing servant agencies by new ones under the control and the direction of women. She stated that the police had conducted perfunctory inspections intervening only after concrete accusations for the sake of appearances. Discussions about abolishing these agencies had been held by the Commission of Labour but the decision was never implemented. It is implied that neither the police nor the Labour Inspection were eager to affect agents' interests. "It is well known", she said, "that the girls run a great danger in these suspicious agencies which are frequented by all sorts of people and where the atmosphere is so demoralizing. As it is well known that no inspection has been conducted in these agencies [...] In this country where every attempt at inspection is destined to fail, the only solution is to close them down".[67] Yet, it was not only the demoralizing environment but also the economic exploitation of servants by these agencies that provoked the reaction of the inspector. In addition, she referred to other kinds of so-called agents and also well-known pimps, such as the provincial postmen.

The control of the servant population went hand in hand with the attempts of professionalization. The need for moral, honest and skilled servant labour led to a synchronization of the activities of repressing prostitution and establishing offices of employment for servants.

The Patriotic Institution for the Protection of the Child "protected every unprotected and abandoned child and took care for its positioning and rehabilitation". There were several measures and initiatives undertaken for the rehabilitation of children: 1. Orphan and abandoned children were sent to asylums and orphanages. 2. It positioned children that were not eligible to enter an orphanage to families which received an alimony until children's "settlement" or their adoption. 3. It undertook all the necessary formalities for the adoption of children under twelve

---

[65] "Report of the executive committee of the National Council of Greek Women", *Ellinis*, April 1932, p. 100.
[66] Reports of the body of inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation, 1921, p. 17.

years old in Athens or in provinces after inquiring the situation of foster parents. 4. It positioned children whose mothers worked outside the house to families receiving alimony by the mother. 5. It positioned to various jobs children above twelve years old after inquiring the conditions of labour.[68]

The Branch of the Office of Employment under the direction of Kalliopi Samartzi was established by the Patriotic Institution. "A lot of women who *deserved* recommendation and protection found appropriate posts either in families who needed domestic personnel or in offices. Due to its transformation and renaming as the Institution for the Protection of the Child, the branch was suppressed and therefore the establishment of this kind of philanthropic service becomes an absolute necessity".[69] Yet, the Institution for the Protection of the Child did not stop placing women in service and girls in families. The journal *To Paidi*, an instrument of the Institution included a section with its activities. Apart from the adoptions, children were positioned in families with the prospect of adoption. As we shall see, the Patriotic Institution positioned an interviewee in a family as a foster child but she was treated as a servant. These children formed a cheap labour force for families who did not have the means to employ servants. In particular, after the Asia Minor war and during the Second World War, orphan or destitute children were positioned as servants with families either without a salary or with a meagre annual one. Some children were given to families with an alimony usually paid by parents or by the Institution although in many cases the provision of alimony was not mentioned. In the proceedings of November-December 1934 the Patriotic Institution positioned an illegitimate child with the family of M.K with an alimony of 400 drachmas paid by his mother who worked as a domestic servant.[70] Furthermore, the Patriotic Institution positioned women as domestic servants. In the proceedings of January 1935, Froso Panajiotopoulou was placed with the Diovounioti family as domestic servant while Marianthi Karamanitaki was placed together with her child.[71] In 1936 another two women were placed in service.[72]

The *Efimeris of Ellinidon* established an Office of Employment in 1930 for positioning

---

[67] Ibid.

[68] "Patriotic Institution for the Protection of the Child: Branch of Information and Kathodigiseon", *Ellinis*, no. 5, 1934, p. 144.

[69] "Branch of the Office for Employment", *Efimeris ton Ellinidon*, 1 Jan. 1930, p. 6 [my emphasis].

[70] " Esoteriki Kinisis", and "Proceedings of the Sector of Positionings and Adoptions", *To Paidi*, no. 29, Jan.-Feb. 1935, p. 42.

[71] "The Action of Patriotic Institution for the Protection of the Child: Proceedings of January 1935", *To Paidi*, nos. 31-2, May-August 1935, pp. 73-76.

[72] "Report of the proceedings of the sectors of positioning, guidance and adoptions", *To Paidi*, Sept-Dec. 1936, p. 53.

women in domestic service and in offices in Athens. "They should bear in mind that they should possess a verified recommendation because without recommendation the gazette cannot pursue their positioning. Those living in provinces who want to be employed in families and offices in Athens can send a letter".[73]

In October 1934 the National Council of Greek Women established the Employment Office as an attempt to substitute the existing registry offices, which were considered as a hotbed of prostitution. Undertaking the control of the servant labour market aimed both at controlling the quality of domestic servants but also as a solution to the shortage of domestic servants. The intertwining of the discourses on prostitution with the professionalization of domestic service shows that the control of the servant labour force was the major objective of the establishment of the offices of employment. In 1938 the office of employment of National Council of Greek Women witnessed a shift from live-in domestic service to day work. A great number of married, widowed, and former servants came to the office looking for employment. It seems that due to, on the one hand, the lack of domestic servants and, on the other hand, the undesirability of unemployed women to work as servants, day work seemed to be an intermediate solution. This type of service labour did not satisfy the office as there was the fear that more and more women would choose day work instead of live-in service: "As far as girls are concerned we do not consider this system [day work] satisfactory. The issue of their accommodation is a serious problem as well as the way they will spend their free time".[74]

A number of schools for servants were introduced in the late nineteenth century. The Ladies' Association for the Education of Women was established in 1872 and one of its aims was "the education of female domestic servants to the appropriate tasks".[75] The President of the Association was Eleni Paparigopoulou and its Secretary was Kalliopi Kehajia. The Association was in close contact with other institutions such as the girls' orphanages. Orphanages were suppliers of servants, while the education of girls to domestic skills was a preparation for their positioning as domestic servants. The vocational school of Amalieio orphanage educated girls as chambermaids. Although there was a lot of resistance during the nineteenth century about the policy of the orphanage for supplying domestic servants, it was only a few years before 1930 that the orphanage changed its policy: "If one considers that a few years ago the orphanage produced girls without any education or suitable only for chambermaids of great houses trained to little sewing and embroidering, one cannot but give congratulation to its

---

[73] ibid., p. 6.

[74] "News", *Ellinis*, no. 5, 1938, p. 114.

Director Mrs K. Papajeorjiou, who had the initiative to transform the simple workshop to real school that gives full skill and training to orphan girls".[76]

As we have already seen in the nineteenth century feminists and philanthropists attempted to regulate service employment undertaking several initiatives such as the Asylum of St Caterina. Domestic servants preoccupied the early feminist movement and several articles dealt with "this nightmare that has become truly a plague for the family, disturbing family peace".[77] Whether the blame was put on servants or on mistresses for the disturbance that this relationship brought to the middle-class family, the servant problem was handled as belonging to the realm of women's responsibility. Considered as a female issue, domestic service held a prominent place in both the *Efimeris ton Kirion* as well as in philanthropic activity in which members of the *Efimeris* were not only actively involved but also influenced its orientation. The *Efimeris* gave advice to mistresses about how they should treat their servants and to a large extent acted as a problem solver of tensions and conflicts that arose in this relationship. Providing a fair salary and a decent room, controlling anger, and acting as parental figures, advising and instilling moral and religious values were the main lines of a fair treatment.[78]

> We are not tired of insisting on the necessity of taking measures, because the state of our servants has caused great damages to the family and social level. Among social issues the servant question is of central importance. (...) It is not only our servants who need education but we ourselves. (...) We feel that a school of servants is not by itself adequate for the formation of the servant sector. Reading, writing and some mathematics skills are indeed necessary, and moral and religious education is valuable for servants. [79]

The establishment of Sunday Schools in Athens and later in Piraeus aimed at safeguarding the moral character of female workers and preparing them for confronting the immoral environment of the factory but also resisting the attacks and harassments by male employers.[80] In addition, the introduction of vocational schools and workshops aimed at occupying women in a decent and moral environment.

> The ladies of the Association aim at safeguarding the dignity of the young woman and so that after her education as a human being and woman to be destined to educate and moralize of popular classes.[81]

---

[75] *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, Ladies' Association for the Education of Women, 9 April 1872.
[76] "Newsreel", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 137, 31 March 1931, p. 5.
[77] Maria D., "Complains against servants", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 8, 8 March 1887, p. 5.
[78] "The responsible", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 849, 23 October 1905, pp. 1-2.
[79] Kalirroi Parren, "A school for servants", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 141, 19 Nov. 1889, p.4.
[80] "Our Anatolian men", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 848, 16 October 1905, p. 2.
[81] "The protection of female worker", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 780, February 1904, p. 7.

The influence of conduct literature and of the ideology of paternalism that purveyed philanthropic activity and was the tool through which the relationship of middle-class to the lower classes was organized can be traced in the treatment of Eleftheria by her mistress. The mistress tried to keep up with the standards set by the middle-class conduct literature, which dealt with the management of servants.[82] Eleftheria was well fed, she had her own bed but not a room of her own, she had clothes, and a coat made from a blanket. Middle-class women had to show what they perceived as kindness to servants in order to be rewarded with faith and hard work. The instruction of moral and religious values, according to the principles of this literature, was an integral part of the obligation of catering for the material needs of servants. Eleftheria was sent to a Sunday school and in the evening she was trained as a seamstress. In addition, she was taught to read and write by her mistress. "She wanted to refine my manners and cultivate my mind". This attitude was aligned to the nineteenth-century philanthropic discourse that considered the moral education of servants as well as the training of the lower classes to "feminine" occupations as tasks that had to be undertaken by middle-class women.[83] The role of middle-class women as civilizers and moralisers of the lower classes was an essential part of female middle-class identity. In few cases religious attendance was imposed to domestic staff, yet the servants attended the mass in a row, each once a fortnight, in order not to deprive employers of their services in the morning. The recurring perception of servants and lower classes in general as children and as savages who lack the qualities of human beings called for the introduction of a campaign for their redemption implemented through institutions among which service was an important one.

---

[82] "We have to be polite even with our subordinates and especially with those that are condemned to work under our orders in order to survive. We should never make them feel like that. We have to talk to them with kindness and not to behave the way some ladies do, who treat their servants with cruelty. By behaving in this way, they should not complain if servants behave badly. Besides, we should not exploit our servants and give them a meagre wage. On the contrary, we should reward them generously and even increase their wages. Moreover, we should provide them with enough food, and a good and well-ventilated room. Then we could have demands. A servant whom we love and care for will never behave badly if her masters set an example"; "Advice column", *Evdomas*, 52, 6 Oct. 1928, p. 1083.

[83] The "League of Ladies" in Piraeus established in 1904 a Sunday School whose aim was the education and protection of "the weak". "The female workers of Piraeus need moral protection and support, they need to be protected by the risks they run in the factory due to their ignorance and innocence. The ladies of the League have as their primary target to safeguard the honour of the girl and then to educate her as a human being and as a woman so that she will become in her turn the educator and the moraliser of the lower classes", Kalirroi Parren, "The protection of the female worker", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 780, Feb. 1904, p. 6-7. The School of Housekeeping introduced a Sunday School for "uneducated workers and servants": "A priest explains the Gospels, while reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as the duties of the woman in the family, in society and in the nation are taught. Those who have uneducated servants can send them to the Sunday School for educating them"; "Sunday classes for female workers", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 1000, 15-28 February 1911, p. 1512.

The regulation of domestic service and the management of the house were perceived mainly as responsibilities of middle-class women. The initiatives targeted middle-class housewives with the aim of gaining control over the house and over servants. The establishment of Housekeeping Schools for middle-class girls aimed at educating future housewives in the management of the household. The presence of domestic servants in the middle-class household appears in the discourse of early feminists as an undesirable necessity. They argued that because the majority of housewives employed one servant, "of 20-25 drachmas a month, who is usually the waste of servants, that is lazy, negligent, filthy, squanderer, completely ignorant about everything"[84], it was necessary for women to acquire skills in housewifery. In particular, it was argued, the lack of skilled personnel and the indifference of cooks and other servants for the strains of the family budget made it necessary for housewives to gain control over their household:

> All these, for those who ignore the art of doing them [chores] alone and of preparing and guiding their servants, require a lot of money; not so much money spent on material but on salaries of domestic personnel. They lead to the exhaustion of the wealth and quietness of the family due to hired persons. We ask every family head and every housewife whether they spend more money in meat and other kind of food or in salaries, mismanagement and stealing by domestic personnel.[85]

The housewifery program included cooking, cutting and needlework of linen and underwear, dressmaking, washing, ironing, and bookkeeping. The vocational school included floriculture, plastic arts, wood engraving, painting, and photography. Half of the classes were addressed to "ladies and misses" and half to domestic servants and workers.

> What is going to be the major achievement of vocational schools is the moral gain for workers who will not wander, as they did in the past, in the streets of Athens from factory to factory [...] Furthermore, through the training of young women of the middle class in housewifery, the financial problem of the house, to which our financial sickliness can be attributed, will be solved. [86]

The establishment of vocational schools was one of the major aims of women's associations in the inter-war period. Providing work to refugees in the associations' workshops was a means to control female refugee population. The Manufacture Sector of the National

---

[84] "So-called queens", ibid., no. 889, 29 October 1906, pp. 1-2

[85] "Women's kingdom", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 750, 19 May 1903, pp. 1-2; see also, "Housekeepers and housekeeping", ibid., no. 837, May 1905, pp. 5-6; ibid., no. 838, 29 May 1905, pp. 4-5; "Danger", ibid., no 882, 18 June 1906, pp. 1-2; "So-called queens", ibid., no. 889, 29 October 1906, pp. 1-2.

[86] Kallirroi Parren, "Vocational and housekeeping sector", *Praktika tis Enoseos ton Ellinidon, 1897-98* [Report of the proceedings of the Association of Greek Women], Athens, 1899, pp. 91.

Council of Greek Women established workshops that employed female workers and supplied the majority of them with work at home.[87] The House of Girls and YWCA also established a number of workshops where refugee girls were provided with utilitarian and practical education in order to pursue an "independent economic life". This was considered a solution to the problem of prostitution as well as a form of employment that was performed in a moral and controlled environment and unlike the immoral setting of a factory. Yet, transforming female workforce into home workers was castigated by Maria Svolou as a violation of workers' rights. The wages women received when employed in philanthropic or other institutions and Schools were much lower than any other private enterprise.[88] Athina Gaitanou-Giannou, the president of the Socialist Women's Group admired the embroidery work produced in the Empeirikion reformatory school for girls. The inmates were occupied in luxury lingerie, dress making, hat making for women, and men's underwear.[89] Especially dressmaking and in general needlework that was done at home was considered as a strategy of the upper and middle-class females to get goods such as linen, lingerie, and lace at a low cost. The Branch of Housewifery organized by Ioulia Straight had three classes: cooking, sewing and domestic economy for "ladies and misses as well as for domestic servants and women of the lower classes with fees according to the social class of the students".[90] The teachers were from the Charokopeion School of Domestic Economy.

Housewifery schools since the late nineteenth century were mainly addressed to middle-class women, although domestic servants might have followed these classes. Although the aim of these schools was the introduction of middle-class women to the management of the household and of servants as well as of the family budget, there was always the hope that knowledge in housewifery would eliminate the need for servants or at least servant's mismanagement of household property; in the same way as good mothering would eliminate the disastrous effects of *gouvernantes* on the bringing up of children.[91] The new domestic electric appliances were celebrated as relieving mistresses from household conflict produced by servants promising a future without servants.

> It is true that no American woman has domestic servants in her house but does all the chores herself. But it is easy for everybody to purchase all these

---

[87] "Report of the proceedings of the National Council of Greek Women during 1924", *Ellinis*, no. 4, April 1925, p. 75. A huge number of workshops was established, see, for example, Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou, "The Charity Brotherhood of the Ladies in Nea Ionia", *Ellinis*, nos. 6-7, June-July 1925, p. 131.

[88] "Maria Svolou, "The Greek female worker", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 7, Feb. 1924, p. 4.

[89] "The Embirikeion Asylon", *Ellinis*, no. 3, 1934, p. 93.

[90] GAK, Metaxas Archive, B, folder 20-4, Patriotic Association of Greek Women, p. 38.

[91] "We distrust the nanny", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 25, 23 August 1887, p. 2.

> machines with the system of monthly instalments, which is widespread in the United States.[92]

The "true" story of a middle-class mistress who found the ideal servant reveals not only what the requirements were from a servant but also the naturalization of class distinction. The mistress was without a servant, "this necessary and valuable misfortune", for 10 days. A friend of hers recommended a girl, cousin of her servant, from the island. Both looked pretty and honest.

> She was a pretty, full of health, blond islander, with a proud body and a gold chaplet of thick plates in her head. I liked from the first sight her modest look, the cheap sparkling dress, her thick socks and insular slippers.[93]

As she did not know how to do the chores, she refused a salary until she learned the housekeeping. However, she had notified her mistress in advance that she would not stay permanently. In a week Maria became the perfect servant: "She was disciplined, she was respectful but without being servile, invisible but always present, stealthy like a shadow but worth for ten. All the time she stayed in my house, she did not even get close to the window and the only person she ever talked was her cousin".[94] Finally, it turned out that both servants were two very rich women from the countryside. One of them fell in love with a gentleman and she would not marry him until she was sure that she could be a lady. For that reason she traveled to Athens to become a servant in order to see how a lady is and whether she too could become a lady. Maria had simply accompanied her in Athens.

As late as 1940, it appeared as if the debates on labour legislation had never existed. The above narrative brings us back to dominant nineteenth-century perceptions about domestic service as a private issue allocated to the mistress and to its crude personalization.[95] Through the ruralization of the issue, an idealized image of the past transported to the present signified the lacks and impossibilities of the present. The demands of mistresses and the qualities of servants expressed through endeavours like the Asylum of St Caterina acquire here their full arrogance. The mistress and her friend did not meet the perfect servants (these do not exist according to the narrative), because they were not finally "true" servants. They were wealthy rural women whose richness was not the immoralizing wealth of the urban

---

[92] Agni Stouditou, "Small news: the electric house", *Ellinis*, nos. 8-9, Aug.-Sept. 1924, p. 180.
[93] M.M.Th., "Two female physiognomies", *Ellinis*, no. 2, 1940, p. 33.
[94] Ibid., p. 33.
[95] An example of the treatment of domestic service as a private issue between mistress and servant we have already seen in footnote 82.

bourgeoisie but consisted of vineyards, plots, cutlery, houses, and servants. "She would become a *doula* in order to learn manners from a lady and to become a lady".[96] This idealized depiction is darted to the future. A future in which not an "ordinary lady" but a "truly Greek female physiognomy" would be born out of the marriage of tradition with modernity and, probably, free from the need of servants.

The gendered space of the house was not immune of class conflict. Through the attempts by middle-class females and their associations to take possession of and regulate the private sphere and its underlying relationships, the private was brought in the most dynamic way to the public. During the inter-war period, domestic service moved from being dealt as a private issue between middle-class mistresses and servants to a public topic.

The localization of class conflict in the mistress-servant relationship was produced through the gendered division of roles which middle-class women promoted since the late nineteenth century. By promoting actively their participation in public affairs and politics in terms of a gendered sphere of interests based on biological notions of the female nature, middle-class women became tied with all the questions that touched this sphere. A central aspect of this realm was the relationship with servants. Women laid claims to a privileged position in the household in which men had no place. In a letter sent to the *Efimeris ton Kirion* with the eloquent title "No men in the servant issue", the involvement of men in the household and especially in the management of servants constituted a violation of women's natural and social rights:

> It is not possible to exist, in a social sense, a household without a woman. When the woman does not observe closely servants in the kitchen and in the rest of the house, it is not possible to manage the household in the manner the housewife has a right to demand even in the cases she trusts servants. [...] We insist particularly on that because many masters, ignoring their duties and getting outside the circle that nature and society has bestowed them, intermingle in the family as far as the evaluation of servants is concerned with damaging effects for the family because they turn off constantly servants who enjoy the appreciation of their mistresses.[97]

The continuity of the tensions in the household that appeared in the discourses of the inter-war period illustrated that the relationship with servants was an essential factor in the formation of female middle-class identity. The involvement of middle-class women in the shaping of the social policy on women and children showed the entanglement of their interests

---

[96] Ibid., p. 34.

[97] "No men on the servant issue", *Efimeris ton Kirion*, no. 10, 10 May 1887, p. 3

as housewives, and thus as employers of servants, with their public campaigns on the civil and political rights as well as on the protection of working-class women and children. This intertwining of interests is illustrated in the shifting of discourses from the public to the personal. The following words come from Vertha Lekka, who became the President of the Patriotic Institution in 1935:

> I would have an eager servant instead of one with a long face as I have now because she must carry water in buckets in the upper floor. I wouldn't be obliged to tell to my servant: "Economize water" and she could wash my dishes and pots with more water. I wouldn't be obliged to go around the neighbourhoods and ask for water because my servants were not careful and spent all the water. [...] The arguments of my servant with the other residents would be avoided.[98]

Women's associations laid claims to the regulation of domestic service and aspired to the professionalization of domestic servants through their training in Housekeeping Schools:

> The technical training of specialized professionals of housekeeping sectors has an extreme importance in our country in which the off-handiness of paid household labour performed by professional servants without any specialization and system is lamentable while the ignorance and of these various professionals of the sector and especially of domestic servants contributes to the degradation of themselves and of the trade, in which human conditions could be secured even in the current form of live-in service.[99]

Although Maria Svolou was one of the most fervent supporters of the application of labour legislation to domestic service, here she attributed the cause for the inhumane conditions of service employment to the low level of the services domestic servants provided due to their lack of education and ignorance. Yet, even the application of labour legislation to domestic service was viewed as necessary for the improvement of the conditions of service employment because due to their ignorance and low level of education, domestic servants would not form a union and fight for their rights. Thus, the state had to intervene with its social policy and legislation to protect workers' interests where they were unable to fight for their own interests. Paternalism appears again as an organizing principle of the social policy.

> In our country where there is such an exploitation of domestic servants - contrary to what is argued- and the indifference about their health is almost absolute without any provision for the accidents that occur in work that many times cause partial or total disability, it was absolutely necessary legislation on labour accidents to include this class. Apart from all the rest, there is no hope

---

[98] Vertha Lekka, "If we had water", *Ellinis*, no. 12, December 1924, p. 269.

[99] Maria Svolou, "The Housekeeping School of Charokopeio", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 103, 31 October 1929, p. 6.

> that the ignorance which haunts [the class of servants] will be erased in the near future, so that they will be interested themselves in their health and bodily security, although in this period due to the shortage of working hands in this sector they could succeed to gain better conditions at this point.[100]

The participation of the members of League of Women's Rights and of the Socialist Women's Group in international conferences of the League of Nations brought them close to developments in the position of domestic servants abroad. In Austria the union of domestic servants achieved the introduction of a number of laws and amendments concerning their inclusion in pension schemes, annual leave with payment, rest during the day, and dwelling.[101] Feminist organizations and associations were mainly preoccupied with juvenile servants and considered premature the formation of a union by servants. Particularly for the socialists, like Athina Gaitanou-Giannou, women should be first educated and then fight for their labour and political rights:

> I would like to add that a union that would protect these girls would not probably achieve much if there hadn't been first a wide work towards juvenile workers inside the house and school in their perceptions.[102]

Not only women but the lower classes in general were considered by socialists as being in the stage of the age of childhood of humanity in terms of mental development and a long way to reach manhood through enlightening and education.[103]

The International Inspectorate of Labour published an article of Erna Magnus on domestic servants on the conditions of servant labour in the journal *Ellinis*. The article describes the psychological strain that servants underwent due to their isolation in the house of employers. Furthermore, the low estimation of servant labour diffused in society is attributed to the fact that servant labour is not considered as productive labour. Thus, the article argued that domestic servants had been excluded from the social laws that protect the rest of workers. However, although it was admitted that the employer-employee relationship was completely arbitrary as it was not amenable to any law, the measures proposed focused on the need to professionalize service employment by educating domestic servants. The need

---

[100] Svolou, "Labour bills", p. 3.

[101] "Fourth International conference of Socialists in Vienna", *Sosialistiki Zoi*, no. 33, 23 July 1931, p. 356; "International news", *ibid.*, no. 48, October 1932, p. 514-5.

[102] Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou, "The skivvies", *Ellinis*, nos 8-9, August-Sept. 1926, pp. 181-2. For political rights in municipal elections, Gianniou argued that women should first be enlightened and then get political rights. The fact that women voted for conservative parties abroad was attributed to the lack of consciousness as they were influenced by their husbands. Athina Gaitanou-Gianniou, "The Greek woman and the vote", *Ellinis*, no. 3, May 1921, pp. 68-70.

for professionalization indicated above all that domestic labour was perceived through the needs of employers who demanded skilled, healthy and honest domestic servants. It expressed the insecurity and anxiety of middle-class employers who perceived domestic servants as a threat to the health of their families and to their property. The Greek editor of the article added a comment which expressed satisfaction for the proposal of the Police Director to provide domestic servants with identity booklets. "This measure", it was argued, will elevate the social level of these working girls who will acquire in this manner some existence".[104]

It is important to see how the president of the association of domestic servants perceived the working conditions of domestic labour. The Association of domestic personnel (servants) was represented at the first conference of women in 1946.[105] The servants' union had 250 members.[106]

> Our life is miserable from all aspects. We wake up very early and we start work until midnight. And if the needs of our masters demand that we do not sleep, we are obliged to work for twenty-four hours. The conditions under which we work are hard and exasperating.
>
> Our payment is restricted to a plate of food and a few drachmas that are not even enough for a pair of socks. If we dare to complain they will say: "We feed you, we accommodate you, and you do not have expenses". But listen to what we eat. Nothing in the morning because sugar is too expensive and there is no need for the servant to drink something hot. For lunch they will eat meat and hor d' oeuvres and fruit, but for us it will be beans or chickpeas or any cheap food depending on the season. They accommodate us. Where do we sleep? In the light wells, in lofts, in *pataria* or in dump and dark basements, in which they wouldn't even put their animals if they didn't have servants. But we don't only live under hard conditions of non-paid work. But also under a constant humiliation and despise.
>
> In many houses they beat us and all the time they constantly threaten us with expulsion.
>
> And when they speak to us their look shows that they speak to people of the lowest status. And this would not be so strange if we met this attitude only from the class of our employers which aims at disparaging us and in various ways make us believe that we are inferior beings in order to handle us easier for their own interest and for their comfort.
>
> But this evil is general in our sector. In the same way that our

---

[103] S.Z, "The insignificant theatrical production of 1931", *Sosialistiki Zoi*, no. 40, February 1932, p. 418.

[104] "Female domestic servants", *Ellinis*, no. 7-8, 1935, pp. 165-6. "So-called queens", ibid., no. 889, 29 October 1906, pp. 1-2.

[105] Talk by the representative of the Association of domestic personnel, First Panhellenic Conference of Women May 1946, Archive of Roza Imvrioti.

[106] A servants' union was established and authorized by the court of the first instance in 21 April 1935 under the name Association of Servants in Athens and Pireaus; Archive of the court of first instance, 5551/35 enactment. In 1936 the Association was dissolved..

> employers despise us, equally the state despises us and does not pass any protective legislation for us. In the same way they all despise us. There are houses in which they treat us as human beings but these are exceptional. We ask women to raise their voices for us and to help us to work under the same conditions.

IV. Exclusion from Working-Class Identity

The social and cultural meanings of labour are of great importance for the understanding of the exclusion of domestic servants from the working class but also for the production of one's sense of labour. The meanings assigned to labour are historically bound. In the inter-war period and particularly during the Second World War there was a particular concept of labour improvised by the labour movement that invested forms of labour such as industrial labour with positive values while stripped other forms of labour such as domestic service of any positive meaning, perceiving it as producing an imitative subjecthood and as unproductive. The attribution of positive meaning to industrial labour was related with dominant political ideas which permeated the working-class movement and which are still haunting the Greek historiography. These political ideas shaped society's ideas about valuable and respectable forms of labour and produced a certain subjective sense of domestic labour and feelings of shame to those who worked as servants and belonged to urban working-class communities such as refugees.

We have already seen that the attachment of stigma to domestic service by the working-class community and resistance movement through its connection with sexuality demonstrated that the sexualization of domestic service by the middle-class was shared by the working-class communities. The servants' unions have repeatedly expressed the marginalization of domestic service from the working-class movement:

> In 1943 the temporary administrative committee of the union issued the following leaflet: "All the working strata of our country struggle for the improvement of their position and gained ground to a lot of their issues. While our situation is desperate as our sector is the most exploited compared to the other professions. Our union is dissolved since 1936. No one is interested in us. We all know the long hours of work and our salary and it is enough to say that 90% of us get 600-1,000 drachmas a month. The food, both in quality and quantity, is lousy. There is no weekly rest and it is a torture to get one-two hours leave and this after they put us loads of work. It is enough to say that many employers use even beating. Colleagues, for all this situation a big conference was organized which discussed the measures that have to be taken and decided for the temporary administrative committee of our union which will pursue our organization and the solution of the following issues that concern our lives. Colleagues, we need with a constant presence in the Ministry of Labour to demand the solution of the following issues: 1. Salary:

50,000. 2. Improvement of food in quantity and quality. 3. Clothes. 4. Mess allowance for unemployed colleagues 5. Weekly rest.[107]

Giorgos Sevastikoglou was held responsible of the film sector of the Democratic Army. After the end of the Civil War he left Greece and lived in Taskendi (1949-1956) where he organized the theatre of political exiles. Between 1956-1965, he lived in Moscow and studied in the Superior School of Literature. In 1958, his play *Aggela* was performed for the first time by Vachtangof Theatre. The play was written in Moscow in 1957 and was performed in Greece in 1968 by the *Theatro Technis*.

The setting was a block of flats in a middle-class neighbourhood of Athens in the 1950s. There were five servants living and working in the block, all rural migrants, from the age of sixteen until forty. The plot revolves around a gang of pimps who ran a wide network of prostitution with high ranking political contacts and officers in Police Headquarters. Stratos, one of the pimps, through a love affair with Georgia, one of the servants (she had become a complicit out of a passionate long-time relationship with him), made contact with young servants and drove them to prostitution. Stratos supplied the high society with young girls and acted as the mediator between the political order and the underworld. The play started with the suicide of a servant of the block, Tasia, who had been seduced by Stratos. Realizing that Stratos planned to put her in a brothel, she threw herself from the terrace (the terrace is the meeting point of servants where they when to hang up the washing). Fani ran up the steps and brought the news of suicide to the rest of the servants in the block. The employers were almost all absent. We learn about their cruelties and coldness through the conversations amongst servants. The same day Tasia committed suicide, she was replaced by Aggela, who was called Tasia by her employers out of convenience. Aggela was forced to leave her village and entered service because of the stigma of communism that had been attached to her family: her brother was a guerrilla fighter during the civil war, extracommunicated in a public ceremony in the village by religious authorities and relatives, and finally killed by reactionary forces. The play evokes the complete dissolution of social bonds in the countryside where the majority of those involved in left-wing politics were either forced to leave or left in order to escape from terrorism. Yet, even in big cities it was extremely difficult to get or stay in a job as information of one's direct or indirect (relatives') involvement in the resistance meant immediate dismissal.

The terrorism of the new political order had settled deeply inside the characters of

---

[107] *Genika Archeia tou Kratous* [General Archives of the State], *Prokiriksi pros oles tis ipiretries tis Athinas* [Leaflet to all the servants of Athens], Athens, 1 July 1943.

drama and permeated all relationships and attitudes. Trapped by fear and by circumstances of poverty they all were complicit. Tasia's suicide created a crack in silence. Moreover, it reinforced the violence and repression of dominant order in order to keep itself alive and revealed its methods and the multiple interconnections between political power and the underworld. Menios, a policeman who married Fani, was dismissed from the police force because he knew about the network of prostitution. Stratos promised a job to Lambros, Tasia's brother, in Venezouela and prepared all the necessary papers for him using his connections with state officers. He tried to make Aggela an accomplice by seducing her. Aggela and Lambros are dramatic figures who stand before the moral and political dilemma to withdraw or resist the world of violence and corruption. Aggela's ambivalent position and her constant oscillation between silence and resistance was determined by her affection for Lambros, who was her only chance to escape from the miserable and humiliating conditions of service. Lambros' resistance was shaped by archaic ideas of honour, according to which insult of the moral substance of a family or individual had to be resolved through face-to-face combat and cleaned with blood in order one's face in a local community to be saved (Lambros came from a rural background). The personalization that his ideas of honour involve evade the political understanding of the oppression of the dominant order and the political means of its resolution. When he learned from Aggela that Stratos was the man that seduced his sister and tried to push her to prostitution, his immediate anger was a manifestation of the value-system of honour of the rural community fuelled by the dominant ideology :

> Fatherland means: the houses and the honour of all us together. Not to defend them from a foreigner but to defend them from the natives. In the same way I would kill the enemy in the war today I kill my own enemy. Fatherland and family, that's what the priest preached from the pulpit in the navy yard. And Mr ensign in the moral doctrines- three to four everyday, after the drill. You should know all that.[108]

At the end, during the carnival festival Lambros was stabbed by men in disguise, instruments of Stratos and the state. The carnival is the reminder of the archaic but also of the masking of political power, a terrorist and reactionary regime disguised as a democracy.

The workings of the political system are symbolized by the network of prostitution, a miniature of the corruption and violence of the new order that diffuses its roots in all society. The world of servants represents a defeated working class and the dissolution of social bonds and social solidarity. The attempt to give an account of defeat of the working class and to

---

[108] Giorgos Sevastikoglou, *Aggela*, Athens, Kedros, 1992, p. 166.

convey the atmosphere of passivity in post-war Greece could be served by the figure of the servant for two reasons. Firstly, the use of domestic servant as a means of political understanding has a long history in modern European literature. It was the body of the servant in which class exploitation had been written in the form of sexual exploitation.[109] Secondly, domestic service had been used not only as an illustration of extreme exploitation, but as a vehicle of archaic values and mentalities through its association with rural culture which had traditionally been considered as conservative and backward by the working-class movement and left-wing politics. As a form of employment, domestic service was perceived as encompassing inherently in its structures an archaic mode of economic relationships which resists class-consciousness awakening and transformation.

Melodrama was one of the prevalent and long-lasting modes to express class exploitation. As Robert Corrigan wrote, "melodrama not only was the prevailing form of popular entertainment, it was also the dominant modality of all nineteenth-century British life and thought".[110] The prevalence of melodrama could be related to its ability to account for individual exploitation and feelings of injustice within a radical and democratic critique of an exploitative political order. Melodramatic imagination has resisted through time due to its liability to transformation and accommodation. In *Aggela*, although a realist drama, the elements of melodrama can be found in the plot and in the characters.

The authenticity of the setting is one of the strong melodramatic elements in the play. The block of flats in Athens and the servant girls evoke a familiar landscape. The dramatic tension of the plot revolves around the heroine's plight produced by a villainous male and the innocent rural girls who become victims of villainous men. The categories of evil and good are personalized. The atmosphere of intrigue and seduction is a melodramatic element as is the coming to consciousness of oneself and of the injustices of the political system through personal experience. The heroine is depicted as a fallen woman scorned by society while the seducer, a social superior and outwardly respectable, went unpunished.[111] The radical element in the play is that there is no salvation apart from political activity. In the end, Lambros was stabbed but it is not clear if he died. Melodrama saw the world in class terms, in the sense that

---

[109] See, Carolyn Steedman, "A Weekend with Elektra", *Literature and History*, vol. 6, no. 1, Spring 1997, pp. 17-42; Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa*, Oxford, 1982.

[110] Louis James, "Taking melodrama seriously: theatre, and nineteenth-century studies", *History Workshop Journal*, no 3, 1977, p. 152.

[111] Ruth Harris, "Melodrama, Hysteria and Feminine Crimes of Passion in the Fin-de-Siècle", *History Workshop Journal*, no 25, 1988, p. 44.

it dichotomized the social world between high and low, rich and poor.[112] In melodrama the powerless are given a voice.

[112] Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press 1994, p. 186.

PART THREE

Chapter One

Housing Conditions in the Inter-War Period

I. Working-Class Settlement in Athens

After the first decade of the twentieth century, although the pace of urbanization and industrialization accelerated, building activity as well as the expansion of the city of Athens slowed down, creating an acute housing problem for the working-class population. The Greek state, however, did not develop a housing policy to deal with the lack of housing and the exploitation of the working-class population by estate proprietors. Workers settled in the western and northwestern areas of the city in districts concentrated around their workplaces, and crowded in the most degrading houses. A sub-market controlled by small landholders developed to house the poor.[1]

A survey of working-class housing conditions in Athens and Piraeus was conducted in 1921 by inspectors responsible for monitoring the implementation of labour legislation.[2] The report surveyed 2,000 houses in Athens and Piraeus. The conditions of housing were appalling. Demand for insufficient supplies of housing in the center, as well as in the residential areas outside the center, caused a separate housing market for the working population to grow. Houses of mud, wood and tin were built, and kitchens, closets and laundry rooms were converted into rooms. The inspectors identified two types of working-class settlement: those located in the center in which two-storey houses and basements dominated and those in outer areas which seemed more spacious but consisted of "dilapidated old ruined buildings in which the stairs collapse under the feet of those who try to climb them, with walls full of moisture, through which water sometimes comes, without windows, and with water dripping from the roof when it rains".[3]

In contrast to the late-nineteenth century pattern of settlement according to which the working-class population clustered according to place of origin, twentieth-century settlement was oriented around the workplace. There were three patterns of workers' housing distribution. Servants, shoe polishers, washerwomen, charwomen, those who needed to travel easily to the homes of their middle-class employers or to their jobs mostly settled in the center of the city.

---

[1] Leontidou, *Poleis tis siopis*, p. 147.

[2] *Ipourgeion Ethinikis Oikonomias, Diefthinsins ergasias kai koinonikis pronoias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Erevna epi ton sinthikon tis ergatikis katoikias ton poleon Athinon-Piraios 1921* [Ministry of Economic Affairs, Report on the conditions of working-class housing, 1921, Athens 1922.

[3] Ibid, p. 13

Industrial workers lived between the center and the industrial zones so that they could avoid the cost of transportation. Grooms and small traders were concentrated along the commercial roads, while peddlars preferred the center in order to have greater access to opportunities of work.

Overcrowding characterized and deteriorated the living conditions of working class families: 76% of the surveyed families in Athens and 85% of the families in Piraeus were living in only one room. Nearly one quarter of one room dwellings were occupied by two people; a further fifth by three people. In 15% of one-room dwellings there were four people and in more than 10% six people.

In addition, not only cramped space but lack of light contributed to the insanitary and depressing dwelling conditions. 3% of the houses surveyed were completely dark, while 69% had one window, 24% two windows and 3% three windows. The proportion of houses with kitchens was 12%, and the majority of working class families used a brazier (a movable stove) which was kept inside the room in the winter and moved outside in the summer. Five to fifteen families shared a closet, while in communities in the city center hygienic conditions were even worse because not only the proprietors of shops but passers-by also used the closets of working-class houses.[4] Only 18% of the houses had laundries. Washing was done in the yard or in the house, where the washing was then pegged out in the single room in which the family lived. "And the lack of laundries is even worse in the houses where washerwomen live, which is a very common situation in working-class neighborhoods. Then yards are transformed into swamps, the atmosphere is poisoned by the steam of the dirty water and the smoke of burning wood".[5]

One of the greatest problems in Athens in the 1920s was lack of access to water. In working-class neighborhoods the problem was accentuated. According to the survey only 65 out of 1,000 houses had water a supply. In most neighborhoods families got water from the public tap, as the municipal authorities turned off those existed in yards, which catered for 10 and 15 families, because proprietors refused to pay the charges.

During the 1930s and 40s working-class housing continued to be inadequate, insanitary and unhealthy. In a 1931 report it was stated that although 11,743 new settlements had been built in the past five years, the conditions of working class housing had not improved and overcrowding and unhealthy housing continued to be the norm, because the working class

---

[4] Ibid, p. 18.
[5] Ibid, p. 18.

lacked the means and the financial resources to move to a new settlement. Censuses of buildings in Athens are indicative of the high density of working-class residence. In 1914 there were 29,000 buildings in Athens, with 45,527 dwelling units for 175,000 inhabitants (3.84 inhabitants per dwelling) In 1926-7 there were 59,270 houses for 642,000 inhabitants (10.83 inhabitants per dwelling).[6] As for the refugees, an investigation in 1940 by the Institution of Social Insurance in cooperation with the Department of the Environment concluded that 57% of 60,000 residences in the sample surveyed in Athens, Piraeus and Elefsina had only one room, while the majority of houses were inhabited by 2-5 persons.[7] Another survey in 1951 during the slum clearance project conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare reported 10,664 shacks in the capital city.

II. Middle-Class Housing

Segregation of social classes was built into the urban area of Athens. Middle-class settlements were separated geographically and differentiated visibly from working-class settlements. Although the center of the city was characterized by a concentration of different classes, the composition of each neighbourhood was single-class. The main commercial arteries, the railway, the industrial zones as well natural boundaries such as the Stadium, Acropolis, and Lycabettus separated bourgeois from working-class neighborhoods. "Kolonaki in the era of the Second World War was not Athens and yet it was part of it. [...] The misery of Athens was completely unknown in Kolonaki".[8] Apart from the exclusivity of bourgeois communities another aspect of the polarization of social class was social segregation in the suburbs, called "garden cities". As Lila Leontidou argues, these communities were not just a product of wealth but especially of control and influence over planning legislation.[9] The class homogeneity of the communities of Psychico, Philothei and Ekali was achieved through a building code which specified all matters of planning, architecture and layout in detail and did not allow more than one family per building plot or its use other than for residences. Blocks started to dominate building development, and dense conglomeration increasingly characterized upper class settlement, predominantly in Kolonaki.

During the inter-war period, upper-class residence concentrated on the eastern side of

---

[6] Leontidou, *Poleis tis siopis*, p. 218.
[7] ibid., p. 217.
[8] Eudes, quoted in Leondidou, p. 219.
[9] Leontidou, *Poleis tis siopis*, p. 224-227.

Lycabettus hill, which included the districts of Areopagitou, Evagelismos and Lykeiou.[10] The second entity of upper- and middle-class residence was along Patission Street, which included eleven districts. The third entity was the old center in the wider area around Syntagma Square where the bourgeoisie had started to build houses in the 1870s. The fourth entity was along the Ilisos river and included fourteen districts. Middle- and lower- middle class residence was located on the western side of Lycabettus and included the districts of Lycabettus and Neapoli. Multi-storey blocks of flats appeared in 1921 but it was especially in the period 1932-1941 that the construction blocks of flats intensified. On the eastern side of Lycabettus, in Patission Street, and on the western side of Lycabettus 100%, 95% and 100% respectively of building blocks were residential. The social composition of the residents of these multi-storey blocks of flats between 1925 and 1931 was predominantly upper class, while between 1932 and 1941 the majority of residents were middle class. In the districts on the eastern side of Lycabettus 66% of the flats were occupied by only upper class residents while only 25% were mixed, i.e. upper-class and middle-class, and 8% were only middle-class. In the residences along Patission Street 20.5% were occupied by only upper-class residents, 29% were mixed upper- and middle-class, and 50% were only middle-class. On the western side of Lycabettus, 75% were occupied by only middle-class residents, 12.5% by upper-class and 12.5% by mixed residents. In the districts of the center of Athens 20% of flats were occupied by upper middle class, 20% by mixed and 60% by middle class residents.[11] Thus, during the 1928-1941 period there was an important segregation between upper-class and middle-class residents which corresponded to their distribution in different districts. The majority of flats, according to the research conducted by Manolis Marmaras, which was based on a sample of 19.6% of the total number of buildings in the 1925-1941 period, were on average 171.3 square meters. The spaciousness of these flats indicates that multi-storey blocks of flats targeted an upper class market.[12]

The organization of the interior layout of flats during the 1919-1927 period was characterized by the absence of separation between the main functional entities, while only the kitchen was relatively autonomous from the rest of the layout.[13] The bedrooms and the living room communicated directly with the entrance and their access was usually through the entrance. This organization followed earlier practices in the interior organization of dwellings.

---

[10] Marmaras, *I astiki polikatoikia*, p. 110.
[11] ibid., pp. 136-40.
[12] ibid., p. 191.
[13] This information about the organization of the interior layout of flats in the three different periods is drawn from research by Marmaras, ibid., pp. 186-190.

The kitchen and bathroom were located at the back of the building. In the 1928-1931 period, the entrance started to function as a separating area between the zones of the different activities that took place in the house, and thus between its various parts, especially between the living room and the bedrooms. This new organization of the interior function solidified in the period 1932-1941, during which either the kitchen and bedrooms comprised a unified entity that communicated through a corridor or the kitchen communicated with the dining room. The third and most common organization of interiors was a combination of the above two types in which kitchen and bedrooms composed a unified entity but there was simultaneously communication between the kitchen and the dining room.

The houses of the interviewees' employers were located in the entities of upper- and middle-class residence and along the lines indicated in the studies on residence in the inter-war period that have been examined above. Upper-middle class employers resided in Kolonaki, along Patission Street, in the garden district of Philothei or in the old center, while some also had summer dwellings in Kifisia. Those who resided in detached houses, usually three storeys, had a laundry in the basement or on the terrace, as well as storerooms in which large quantities of food and coal were kept. In many of these dwellings the kitchen was in the basement and servants used a small lift to transfer food to the dining room. Upper-class dwellings had one or two rooms for servants, located usually in the basement, next to the laundry, the kitchen and the storage rooms, or on the terrace on top of the building. These houses either had all the family rooms on one floor or the living and dining room and study on one floor and the bedrooms on the upper floor. In multi-storey blocks upper-class apartments had four bedrooms, two living rooms, and a dining room, while the laundry, the storeroom and the servants' rooms were usually located on the flat roof.

Middle-class and lower middle-class dwellings were located on the western side of Lycabettus (Neapoli), in Mets, Pagrati, Ymittos, Koukaki, and Petralona. Middle-class detached houses were single storey. These houses did not have rooms for servants, or if there were such rooms they were not used by servants. These houses had two or three bedrooms, a living room and a dining room. Lower middle-class houses had two bedrooms and a living room. The detached houses in less developed areas of Athens required different forms of labour from domestic servants than upper- and middle-class houses. Employers in these areas also had hencoops and got goats, as well as vegetable gardens. Water had to be carried from wells and grass had to be picked from the surrounding hills. The lack of water in the city of Athens meant that water had to be carried from public taps, which were sometimes located at long distance, or from wells.

The law suit brought by Maria Svolou against the tenant of her house in Filis Street (in the Patission area) for ownership-occupancy aimed at transforming the function of her property. The property consisted of a semi-underground flat of two rooms, kitchen, two storerooms, and a laundry. On the first floor there was another rented apartment. The arrangement of these units demonstrates that the original use of the semi-underground rooms, before they had been rented, must have been servants' accommodation, and that the first floor was the main living area of the owners. Maria Svolou intended to convert the building in order to live there with her husband: in the yard a room would be built as a storeroom; the entrance would be transformed into an antechamber; as the apartments on the ground floor would be connected with the room built in the yard, the layout created would be used as her husband' office of consisting of an antechamber to be used as a waiting room and office for assistants and secretary, also a large room to be used as an office incorporating his library. The floor above would be used as the couple's living area, while on the flat roof two rooms for servants and a washing room would be built. A separate narrow entrance would connect the storeroom with the first floor "in order that my live-in servant to use this entrance and not pass through the main entrance in front of my husband's office and his clients".[14]

III. Refugee Settlement

Between 1913 and 1922 successive waves of migration impacted on the process of urbanization. In 1928 the composition of urban population was distributed as follows: migrants 33%, natives 39%, refugees 27%. Between 1920-1928 the population of Athens increased by 77%. Yet the burgeoning of the city of Athens should not only be attributed to refugees, but also to the inflow of internal migrants. This increase in the urban population of Athens by 7,4% per year in the period 1920-28 is divided as 4,4% refugees and 3% migrants.[15] 245,062 refugees (22.9% of the refugee population) settled in Athens.[16] According to the Refugee Census of April 1923 there were 67,817 refugees residing in the Municipality of Athens and the surrounding suburbs. In 1928 there were 129,380 refugees residing in the Municipality of Athens, while Athens had 384,731 inhabitants.

Although the inflow of refugees contributed to the increase of the pace of urbanization, it was in the 1930s that the capital city was transformed into a growing urban agglomeration

---

[14] Archive of Contemporary Social History, Unclassified document from Maria Svolou's personal archive, entitled "Law suit of Maria Svolou, resident of Athens, against Mirsini Samothraki before the President of the court of first instance".

[15] Marmaras, *I astiki polikatoikia*, p. 158-59.

and new modes of housing were established. In 1920 8.19% of the total Greek population was concentrated in Athens, in 1928 12.93%, and in 1940 15%.

The settlement of refugees was undertaken by the Fund for Refugee Assistance (established in 1922 and closed down in 1925) and the Refugee Settlement Commission, a supra-national body that was set up in 1923 following an agreement between the Greek government and the League of Nations. From the start the RSC gave priority to the settlement of refugees in rural areas. State activity for the resettlement of refugees was intense during the early years, but from 1926 it was almost negligible, and it was completely abandoned in 1930. In 1930, when its activity ended, RSC had settled only 19.4% of the refugees who lived in Athens and 62.86% of those who lived in other areas of Greece.[17] Thus, the biggest proportion of the population of Athens was self-housed.

In the city of Athens these bodies planned and implemented the geographical and social residential segregation of refugees. While in 1920, 6% of the population of the conurbation of Athens lived in the suburbs of Athens and Piraeus, in 1940 43% of the population resided in suburbs.[18] In Athens and Piraeus refugees settled in 12 large and 34 smaller urban settlements. The first refugee settlements were established in Nea Ionia, Kaisariani, Kokkinia and Vyronas, which were at a distance of at least 4 kilometers from the center of Athens. Between 1922 and 1924 the Fund for Refugee Assistance built 22,337 temporary dwellings in these settlements. Between 1925-1930 the Urban Refugee Settlement Administration Service built 1,764 houses in Vyronas, 1,998 in Kaisariani, 3,864 in Nea Ionia (Podarades), 5,581 in Kokkinia and 400 in Imitos, as well as 4,635 in other settlements.[19] During the period 1934-1936, the settlements of Dourgouti, Stegi, Patrida, Nea Kokkinia, Drapetsona and Alexandras Avenue were established by the Ministry of Hygiene and Social Welfare. Apartment bocks were constructed by the Ministry of Hygiene and Social Welfare from 1934, although the Act On Apartment-Block Properties was passed in 1927.[20] Wealthy refugees invested in building activity, so that in the period 1925-1927, 85.7% of multi-storey building blocks were refugees' property.[21] Around the 12 main refugee communities and the 34 minor ones a large number of squatters concentrated

---

[16] Ibid, p. 181-2.
[17] Leontidou, *Poleis*, p. 231.
[18] Ibid., 208-9.
[19] Anthoula Karamouzi, "Recording and mapping of refugee settlements", *O kserizomos and i alli patrida: Oi prosfigoupoleis stin Ellada* [Uprooting and the Other Country: Refugee Cities in Greece], Etairiea Spoudon Neoellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paideias, Athens 1997, p. 38.
[20] Manolis Marmaras, "The effect of the flow of Asia Minor refugees in intensive building activity of inter-war Athens", in *ibid.*, p. 64. Anthoula Karamouzi, "Recording and mapping of refugee settlements", ibid., p. 42.
[21] Marmaras, "The effect...", p. 65.

who built numerous shacks. They bought plots of land from landowners who sold "agricultural" land as urban plots and were the actual squatters. The property rights of those who bought this land were not disputed, however, because the new owners lobbied for retrospective "legalization". It was its use that was illegal.

Social segregation was not restricted to a separation between refugees and the native population. It was also enforced by different settlement policies towards poor and wealthy refugees. Poor refugees were housed by State bodies, at best, while wealthy refugees were encouraged to settle in central areas or to built private establishments on plots allotted to their co-operatives. For the poor refugees dwellings were built by contractors and then sold to refugees. In 1928, 53% of the houses in the RSC communities remained unsold. Many houses were informally occupied by families and invasions by groups of refugees into dwellings were organized. Another form of illegality was refusal to pay for SRC houses.[22] The majority of refugees did not pay for their settlement. After 1930, urban resettlement was undertaken by the State, and this soon became a battlefield of political interests. The cancellation of debts became a slogan of both the Populist and Liberal parties, which led to further delays in repayment.

Wealthier refugees who managed to save part of their movable property formed co-operatives and built their own houses. Favoured in the allotment of land, they ultimately benefited more from the SRC and State policies than did those who arrived destitute. As far as the distribution of Muslim lands is concerned, because reparations were calculated according to the social status of refugees, the SRC and State policy favoured property holders and the richest strata of the refugee population.[23] Those who were propertyless paid debts while those with property received reparations. This reparation amounted to 5-25% of the property that had been lost and 1/4 was paid in cash and the rest in bonds.

Finally, the distribution of 75,245 refugee families within the Athens area, according to the type of settlement of the refugees, also records that a great proportion of refugees built their own houses. The proportion of the families that the RSC and Fund for Refugee Assistance had housed was 21.7% and 12.4% respectively. 37% of refugee families lived in houses that they themselves had bought or rented. 26% lived in residences that were built by refugees, including a substantial number of shanty dwellings.[24]

The first refugee shelters were wooden barracks, and some were just frames covered

---

[22] Ibid., 234.

[23] Margarita Dritsa, "Refugees and industrialization", in Th. Veremis and G. Goulimis, *Eleftherios Venizelos: koinonia, oikonomia, politiki stin epoxi tou*, Gnosi, Athens, 1989. pp. 62-3.

[24] Ibid, 215.

with sheets and galvanized iron. Houses of mud and straw bricks dried in the sun were built by refugees themselves as well as by the RSC in the first months of its activity. Communal sanitary facilities were placed in the center of the block. Permanent dwellings erected by the RSC were of four types: The first type was single story and was to be occupied by two families so that each family had one room to be used both as living room and bedroom and a smaller room as kitchen and an even smaller room or storage. The second type was identical to the first but had an additional second storey on the same plan and housed four families. The third type consisted of a terrace of houses of one or two storeys for many families. And the fourth type were detached houses of one or two storeys for wealthy families. Each family had separate toilet facilities.[25] As we have already seen, only after 1934 did blocks of flats start to be built.

Concerning the refugee settlement of Kaisariani, between 1922 and 1923 refugees originating mainly from the Ionian coast were put in tents at Imitos. Between 1923 and 1926 the tents were replaced by 500 wooden shacks. The shacks were replaced by 1,000 brick houses, while in 1928 apartment blocks started to be built. In 1928 10,800 people resided in Kaisariani in 1,800 buildings.[26] The school was built in 1929.

A concentration of factories and workshops is to be witnessed in the refugee settlements of the inter-war period. This was an outcome of SRC policy: it conceived its work not as a philanthropic activity, but aimed at creating the conditions for the permanent and productive settlement of refugees.[27] The RSC allotted 40 plots to refugees for the establishment of industrial enterprises, 24 in Nea Ionia, 2 in Kaisariani, 7 in Nikaia, 7 in Imitos, 1 in Vyronas, 1 in Tampuria, 1 in Drapetsona, 1 at Piraeus.

The refugee settlements of Nea Ionia, Kaisariani, Vyronas and Kokkinia were transformed into industrial communities. In 1926 in the refugee settlements of Athens and Piraeus there were 36 industries, including 27 tapestry workshops, 4 weaving industries, 1 dying and chemical works, 1 nail factory, brick workshops, 1 chocolate factory, 1 elastics factory, and pottery workshops. There were 4,532 women and 342 men employed in these industries.

The settlement of Nea Ionia was established in 1923 by the Fund for Refugee Assistance, later substituted by the RSC. The committee allotted 24 plots for the establishment of industrial enterprises in the area of Podarades (later Nea Ionia). Out of 1,200 families which settled in Nea Ionia half were employed in tapestry. Textile factories were established

---

[25] Morgenthau, *I was sent to Athens*, pp. 239-243; Leontidou, *Poleis tis siopis*, p. 233.

[26] Spyros Tzokas, "Refugee Settlement in Kaisariani", in *O kserizomos kai I alli patrida*, p. 122-3.

specializing in tapestry, in cotton and wool production. These factories functioned by systems of piece-work, and to a large extent sent orders to women at home. Yet, even before the establishment of the Nea Ionia settlement, in the area of Podarades, in the settlement of Perissos, there was a considerable industry established.[28] As early as 1919 Nikolaos Kirkinis owner of Greek Wool Industry, had launched procedures for the establishment of a silk-weaving factory in Perissos. In 1923 it was renamed Greek Silk Industry Ltd. Rich water supplies and the availability of refugee labour encouraged the setting up of a considerable number of factories (silk, wool and cotton mills, an electric power factory, spinning and weaving mills) in Perissos, which was transformed into an industrial city. [29] In 1923 Kirkinis bought 150 stremata for the establishment of tenement houses which were of extremely low quality. In 1920 there were 79 inhabitants in Nea Ionia, while in 1928 16,382.

---

[27] Morgenthau, *I was sent to Athens*, pp. 210-11

[28] Olga Vogiatzoglou, "Industrial establishments in Nea Ionia", in *O kserizomos*, p. 153.

[29] Ibid., pp. 154-6.

Chapter Two

Family Histories

I. Demographic Trends and Geographical Backgrounds

Agricultural reforms in 1871 and 1917-1923 led to the consolidation of a system of small landholding in Greece by means of the distribution of small family plots after the breaking up of nationalized land (*ethinkes gaies*), and later by the expropriation of large holdings (*tchiflicks*). In 1928 87% of peasants were landowners, 2.81% tenants, and 3.23% sharecroppers while in 1931 40% of peasants were new owners, comprised of refugees and previously propertyless peasants. The system of sharecropping and tenancy died out after the expropriation of the *tchiflicks*, although in areas like Folegandros sharecropping continued to be the dominant system and still exists today, though to a smaller extent. Small plots and low returns made self-sufficiency "an unattainable dream" for 60% of agricultural units between 1925 and 1928 due to the extension of cultivation to non-fertile lands and the system of three year fallow. During the interwar period the fall in prices due to the impact of international economy on the Greek economy, and military costs and State policy on agriculture (heavy taxes on agricultural produce) had the consequence of a fall in the incomes of agricultural families so that these were barely sufficient for the survival of families. Monetization of the agricultural economy was only possible where there was single cultivation and when the choice of crop entailed cash revenue to be spent on a family's obligations. An abrupt increase in prices made return to an economy of self-sufficiency the only possibility.[1]

The establishment of the Agricultural Bank in 1929 and the introduction of fertilizers, better equipment (metal ploughs) and new seeds increased agricultural production in the period 1929-1940. Cultivation was labour-intensive and based on family labour. For that reason labour was not an added expense in the cost of production, but a means to meet needs and to increase production. After the currant (1893-1903) and tobacco crises (1928), hitting the two export-oriented market crops, family agricultural production was directed to cultivation for the Greek market: mainly grain, cotton, animal food, and vegetables. There was an increase in production of grain by one third between 1923 and 1928, and an increase in the cultivated area since 1923 which continued until the Second World War. Agricultural credit and the peasant

---

[1] Kostas Kostis, *Agrotiki oikonomia kai Georgiki Trapeza* [Agricultural Economy and Agricultural Bank], Athens, MIET, 1987, p. 138-9.

debts increased dramatically, and in 1933 83% of peasants were in dept.[2] Although total grain agricultural production increased, productivity remained low and the acre yield was stagnant between 1915-1932. Thus, self-sufficiency in wheat was not achieved before 1936, while tobacco and cotton production remained stagnant. .

The area of cultivated land in the Cyclades increased between 1918-1921 compared to the previous four year period, but decreased again until the end of the 1930s when increased again.[3] The average income of an agricultural family in the Cyclades in the period 1927-1936 was 11,910 drachmas. In 1936, a year in which the Greek agricultural economy was characterized by an upward trend compared with the 20s and the beginning of the 30s, C. Evelpides calculated the average income of an "average" agricultural family at 21,685, while its basic subsistence amounted to 27,958 drachmas, that is, a 6,000 drachmas deficit.[4] This deficit was supplemented by other occupations and the wages of other members of the family in other employment.

Interviewees from a rural background originated in areas characterized by small land holdings and self-supporting agriculture in which the cultivation of the land aimed at self-subsistence. These areas witnessed great migratory movements to the cities of the Ottoman Empire, to Alexandria, to the United States and to Athens. Female migration took the form of domestic service, and it was especially peasants from the mountainous areas in which self-sufficient agriculture predominated (small land holdings and cultivation based on family labour which in some cases, as in Folegandros, was supplemented by cultivation under the system of sharecropping) who sent young girls to domestic service. In these areas grain, olive trees, legumes and vineyards were the main crops. Cattle raising was also predominant in these areas, usually for domestic consumption. The mountainous villages of Kavo Doro, of Corinthia, of Arta, of Messinia, and the island of Folegandros were some of the areas that supplied the city of Athens with female domestic labour.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Greek population increased by one and a half times, and it doubled after the Balkan wars. During the first half of the century the population of Greece increased dramatically. This increase was a result of the continuous change of the borders of the Greek state and its annexation of new areas, the end of immigration towards the United States and the inflow of refugees between 1916-1922. The

---

[2] Kostas Vergopoulos, *To agrotiko zitima stin Ellada: I koinoniki ensomatosi tis georgias*, Athens, Exantas, 1975 (3rd edition), p. 185.
[3] Kostis, *Agrotiki oikonomia kai Georgiki Trapeza*, p. 34.
[4] Kostis, *Agrotiki...*, p. 136.

major increase in population occurred in the period between 1920-1928 due to the inflow of refugees (table 1).

Table1. Increase of population between 1896-1940

Periods between censuses	Percentage in 1000 inhabitants
1896-1907	7.1
1907-1920	7.4
1920-1928	28.9
1928-1940	13.7

Source: G.S. Siambos, *Dimografiki ekseliskis tis neoteras Ellados, 1821-1985*, Athens 1973, p. 24

Although mortality rates had started to fall after the third decade of the nineteenth century, the high birth rate in the nineteenth century led to a natural increase in population. Infant mortality was high during the nineteenth century as well as in the beginning of the twentieth century contrary to the trends of western European countries. Infant mortality remained high until the end of the interwar period (table 2). After 1890 Greece entered a second phase of demographic transition which was completed after the second world war.[5] Between 1901-1940 both the birth rate and the mortality rate decreased, a trend that after the Second World War led to a shrinking of the base of the age pyramid (table 3). The birth rate had remained at a high level but started to fall in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and even more dramatically at the end of the interwar period. Although the total mortality rate had started to fall in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, a high birth rate contributed to a stable population during the nineteenth century. Interviewees' lives follow these trends. The age of marriage was high, especially for the rural population, while the interviewees started to use contraception at the end of the interwar period, but increasingly after the Second World war. Although the majority of those from a rural background came from families with more than five children, they had 2 to 3 children, while among the urban population women of families of 5 children themselves had on average only 2 children.

[5] Sokratis Petmezas, "I dimografiki siggiria: I defteri fasi tis diadikasias 'dimografikis' metavasis kai i Iperatlantiki Metanastefsi", *I istoria tis Elladas tou eikostou aiona, 1900-1922: Oi aparches*, vol. 1, p. 43.

Table 2. Natural Increase of the population 1890-1950

Years	birth rate	infant mortality	natural increase
1890-4	39	18.28	15.7
1895-9	37.1	17.74	15.3
1900-4	35.2	17.26	14.6
1905-9	33.6	16.6	13.3
1920-4	31.4	14.8	10.2
1925-9	32.4	13.22	15
1930-4	30.4	12.18	13.8
1935-9	27.6	10.88	13
1950-4	21.1	5.33	11.1

Source: Vasileios Valaoras, "A Reconstruction of the Demographic History of Modern Greece", *Milibank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, vol. 38, no.2, 1960, pp. 115-139.

Table 3. Natural Increase of the Population 1901-1940

Years	Birth rate	Mortality rate	Natural increase
1901-1910	39.8	26.3	13.5
1911-1920	30.7	22.9	7.8
1921-1930	31.0	20.1	10.9
1931-1940	28.2	15.7	12.5

Source: Siambos, *Demographiki ekseliksis*,p.20

II. Migrations

To a great extent migration movements absorbed this increase in population. During the second half of the nineteenth century the Greek population in Constantinople reached 250,000, while the population of Smyrna doubled to reach 120,000. The Greek community in Alexandria reached 75,000 at the beginning of the century. The majority of the migrant population originated in areas in which small agricultural properties predominated: the islands of Cyclades, the Peloponnese and the mountainous areas of Thessaly. Additionally, the number of migrants to the United States between 1900 and 1930 amounted to 400,000. Migration prevented a further splintering off of small land holdings while remittances strengthened the budget of the families who remained in the place of origin.

Female migration from the islands of Cyclades has a long history and it seems that it preserved its distinctive features until the 1970s. The topographies of migration shifted during

the early twentieth century from being directed towards the cities of Greek diaspora to Athens but the pattern remained broadly similar. In the eighteenth century and especially during the nineteenth century, migration from the Aegean islands, the Peloponnese and continental Greece in the Asia Minor steadily increased.[6] The economic development of the European ports of the Ottoman Empire after the Anglo-Ottoman commercial treaty of 1838 created manpower demand in the port cities and encouraged migration from the Aegean and mainland Greece, leading to the formation of dense Greek settlements.[7]

So strong was the pattern of female migration in the form of domestic service that Antonios Miliarakis refers to it as a "custom". In his socio-economic and geographical surveys of the islands of Cyclades (Andros, Keos, Amorgos, Tinos) he argues that:

> [I]n Andros as in other Aegean islands, there is an occupation peculiar to these islands [*idiazei eteron ti ergon*] which has been customary for women and girls since the days of Ottoman rule, that is, to work, migrating abroad, in the professions of domestic service and wet-nursing.[8]

During the eighteenth century young women from Syros, Tinos, Andros, Folegandros, Naxos, Serifos, Sifnos, travelled by boat to the rich cities of the Ottoman Empire, mainly Constantinople and Smyrna, to become domestic servants and wet-nurses, mostly in the houses of Greeks. Although these cities continued until the second decade of the twentieth century to be supplied with domestic servants from the islands, from the mid-nineteenth century the advent and the increasing demand by the bourgeoisie of the Greek diaspora communities in Egypt for servants created new paths for female migrants. By the end of the 19th century the communities in Constantinople, Smyrna and Alexandria were the three most important mercantile communities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The islands located on the maritime routes from Alexandria and Constantinople supplied these cities with merchants and manpower. Immigrants from the Aegean islands followed the trade routes south to Alexandria. The development of the Greek diaspora in Alexandria has a long history, albeit its character has undergone changes.[9] From 1850 banking and stock exchange activities became the predominant activities of the Greek diaspora.

---

[6] Paschalis Kitromilides and Alexis Alexandris, "Ethnic Survival, Nationalism and Forced Migration", *Bulletin of the Center for Asia Minor Studies*, Vol. 5, 1984-5, p 12.

[7] Ibid., pp. 12-4.

[8] Antonios Miliarakis, *Ipomnimata perigrafika Kikladon nison, Andros, Keos*, Athens, 1880, p. 58.

[9] For the periodization of the merchandise enterprise of the Greek diaspora communities, see, Christos Hatjiiosif, "*Emporikes paroikies kai anexartiti Ellada: erminies kai provlimata*", *O Politis*, no. 62, 1983, p. 28-34.

The German traveler von Riedesel wrote in 1768 that there were many women from Tinos working as domestic servants in Smyrna and in Constantinople. While the French traveler Olivier wrote in 1792 that there was a great demand for Tinian female servants among Europeans and Greeks of Smyrna, Constantinople and Salonica, and that they were greatly praised and sought after because of their skill, cleanliness and honesty. He added that so great was the number of these young women who migrated to work as servants that every twelve to fifteen days there was a boat to Smyrna full of women going to substitute those who after having worked for four to five years, were returning from Smyrna to Tinos in order to marry. There were additionally two boats full of migrants that travelled to Constantinople and Salonica.[10]

Filippidis also confirms the above information about Tinian female migration. In his study "Geography" he wrote that "the wet nurses [*vyzastres*] of the aristocratic families [*archontikon*] of Constantinople were in the vast majority Tinian".[11] Besides, in a biography of Alexandros Stourzas (1791) written by his sister a special reference is devoted to the wet nurse of the family, Maria Santamoura, originating from Syros. Antonios Miliarakis traces migration from the Aegean islands back to the 17th century, attributing it to the poverty of the islands due to piratical raids and Turkish pillage. Furthermore, he argues that regular maritime communication between Constantinople and Smyrna and the Cycladic islands facilitated this migration. The purpose of such migration was the accumulation of a lump sum as a dowry and for the purchase of household necessities.

Analyzing the records of the Hospital of Epta Pyrgon in Constantinople, A. G. Paspatis concludes that the majority of women who entered the hospital were domestic servants, most and of them came from the Greek State, originating mainly from the islands of Cyclades.[12]

The Greek community was the largest foreign group in Egypt. The 1860s cotton boom led to an increase in Greek immigration to Egypt, which reached its peak in 1920 (table 4). The original Greek community in Egypt was a predominantly trading one involved in commerce in the Levant while using Egypt as their base of operation.[13] Two generations later the community had sunk roots in Egypt. While exports and banking were the main activities of the community, small-scale enterprises constituted a large proportion of its economic activity.

---

[10] See Giorgos Amiralis, *Tiniakes antavgeies: Istoria-Ethnografia*, Athens, 1996, p. 117.

[11] Cited in Miliarakis, *Ipomnimata perigrafika ton Kykladon Nison, Andros...*, Athens, 1880, p. 59.

[12] Paspatis, *To Graikikon Nosokomeion*, p. 169.

[13] Alexander Kitroeff, *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919-1937: Ethnicity and Class*, Ithaca Press, London 1989, p. 7

Table 4. Number of Greek Citizens in Egypt 1897-1937

1897	32,208
1907	62,937
1917	56,731
1927	76,264
1937	68,599

Source: Kitroeff, *The Greeks in Egypt*, p. 13.

In 1888 there were 500 Folegandrians in Egypt, Constantinople and Syros, merchants, artisans and servants, who sent money to their families.[14] The flourishing of mercantile enterprise of Folegandrians in Egypt and Constantinople brought money to the island, while lower-class Folegandrians relied on their wealthy compatriots to offer them employment or to find employment for them. Place of origin played an important role in economic affairs and networks were established in the diaspora communities to facilitate the flow of labour.[15] It took eight to nine hours to travel from Folegandros to Syros by sailing boat, and seventy three hours from Syra to Alexandria. Captains of these boats took women who travelled alone under their protection, and they conveyed information about their needs to their places of origin.[16] A network of controlling women and of diffusion of information had been established, and as we shall see it was very powerful in Athens during the twentieth century. The purpose of female migration was to amass a lump sum in order to contribute to the establishment of a new household. Money was sent to the family for clothes for younger children who remained on the island. On their return migrant domestic servants bought entire household equipment, money for buying furniture and in some cases money to buy a piece of land. The mother of one interviewee who had worked as a servant first in Constantinople and later in Athens purchased three pieces of land.

In Egypt domestic service was by far the largest occupational category. In the 1917 Egyptian census, which registered occupational groups, it appears that the biggest occupational category, irrespective of sex, was domestic servants (table 5).

---

[14] Alkiviadis Charilaou, *I nisos Folegandros*, Athens 1888, p. 35.
[15] Zafeirios Gavalas, *I nisos Folegandros*, Athens, 1886, p. 27.
[16] Miliarakis, *Ipomnimata geografika, Andros, Keos*, p. 59.

Table 5. Occupational structure in Egypt in 1917

Occupational Group	Total number Egyptians	Total number foreigners	Greeks	
			Male	Female
Agriculture	4,006,547	2,353	341	43
Private means	136,327	1,995	287	190
Food products	58,477	3,338	1,654	19
Manufacturing	135,938	8,340	946	1,201
Building trade	64,015	1,571	352	2
Sea transport	7,956	3,873	863	4
Banking and finance	3,025	2,099	502	11
Brokers and traders	4,423	1,707	498	7
Textile merchants	18,177	2,079	833	4
Catering	23,046	4,164	1,993	103
Food trade	145,547	4,172	2,102	16
Medical profession	10,656	1,891	466	98
Domestic service	2,514,989	63,755	933	18,659

Source: Kitroeff, *The Greeks in Egypt*, p.191.

The census of the population in 1920 is indicative of the expansion of migration from Cycladic islands. The census population (*de facto*) of the municipality of Folegandros was 541 (495 in Chora and 46 in Petousa and Livadi), while those registered as the legal population (*de jure*) were 1,137, and those who resided in other municipalities were 223 and 398 were abroad.[17] There were only 1,070 domestic servants *(ipiretikon prosopikon oikogeneion)* in 1920 in the Cycladic islands out of whom 831 were females and 239 males in a population of 122,347. While the population of Sterea, Evoia, Thessalia and Arta, Peloponnese and Crete increased between 1907 and 1920, the population of the Cyclades decreased during this period. This decrease is attributed to migration.[18] In 1920 out of a population of 200,442 only 114,261 resided in their municipality while there were 47,142 people from the islands of Cyclades residing in other municipalities and 39,036 lived abroad. According to the same census there were 49,962 inhabitants of Athens originating from the Cyclades.

Migrants from the Cycladic islands were the first inhabitants of Athens. The Cycladic islands contributed significantly to the increase in the population of Athens. In the 1920 census

[17] Census of the population of Greece, 19 Dec. 1920. IV. Population in the Cycladic islands, Athens, 1923.
[18] Census of the population, 1920.

only 35% of the population of Athens and Piraeus had been born in these municipalities while 10% originated from the Cyclades, 17% from the Peloponnese and 12% from abroad.[19] In 1928, 62,042 people out of a population of 180,541 (that is 34%) abandoned the islands. It was mainly the city of Athens that absorbed the surplus population of these islands. Nine out of ten of these internal migrants settled in Athens. Kolodny talks about a *type of Aegean migration.*[20] Although the population of these islands comprised only the 2.4% of the population born in Greece, it participated in 15% of the regional population movements.

The development of the city of Athens as an administrative center with the intention of being a European city with a bourgeois lifestyle required the growth of a service sector. The development of urban life and the growth of the bourgeoisie could not be sustained without the labour of servants. Complaints about the scarcity of servants appear almost simultaneously with the establishment of Athens as the capital city of the newly-born kingdom.[21] In the account books of the merchant Christodoulos Efthimiou, who kept two live-in servants, one female and one male, we learn that between 1839 and 1846, fifty one domestic servants passed through his household. Thirty one were men, and twenty women. The geographical origin of these servants corroborates the information about the islands of Cyclades as providers of domestic servants. Nineteen of them, the majority of whom were women, originated from the islands of Andros, Naxos, Hydra. Another six came from Roumeli, three from the Peloponnese and three from N. Ipeirus.[22]

III. Family Backgrounds of the Population of Folegandros

Communities and tenurial systems set rules which defined settlement, use of resources, marriage, inheritance, work, labour relationships, how capital could be lent and borrowed, migration, and access to land.[23] Sharecropping tenancies set limits upon labour mobility and obliged tenants to work for a landowner and, thus, affected the availability of labour. These institutions also influenced social structures and demographic behaviour. As the sharecropping system remained strong in Folegandros, it sustained dependence on the landowner and defined

---

[19] Census of the population, 1920.

[20] Emile Kolodny, *Chora D' Amorgos: Un Village Cycladien*, Universite de Provence, 1992, p. 75.

[21] Christiana Luth, *Mia Daneza stin avli tou Othona*, Athina, Ermis, 1981, pp. 30, 60.

[22] Eftichia Liata, *Times kai agatha stin Athina, 1839-1946: Mia martiria apo to katasticho tou emborou Christodoulou Efthimiou* [Prices and goods in Athens, 1839-1946: A testimony from the books of the merchant Christodoulos Efthimiou], Athens, 1984.

[23] Sheilagh C. Ogilvie, "Proto-industrialization in Europe", *Continuity and Change*, vol. 8, no 2, 1993, p. 168.

labour relationships which prevented the male population from becoming a wage-dependent group. We shall examine the interdependence of these factors when we deal with marriage and inheritance. The system of sharecropping secured a stability of labour for the landowner and in a period of scarcity and high wages for agricultural labour this was a favourable situation. For the sharecropper the system provided a security valve in comparison to tenancy because there was no obligation to pay in seasons of bad harvest or disaster and there was a guarantee which was usually higher than the wage.

The population of Folegandros remained relatively stable in the period between 1907-1940, with a slight increase (table 5). As we see (table 6) Chora was the most populated settlement of the island for the period 1896-1940 and lost a significant part of its population during 1951-1971. Conversely, Ano Meria's population increased at a small rate and by 1971 became the largest settlement in the island. As George Giakakis stated, every Cycladic island has its own peculiarities in terms of population movement.[24] The question of migration is all the more relative to these peculiarities.

Table 5. Population of Folegandros

1879	1907	1928	1940	1951	1961	1971
969	962	1015	1095	862	778	646

Source: Emile Kolodny, *La Population des îles de la Grèce*, Aix-en-Provence, Edisud, 1987.

Table IV. Population of Folegandros

	1861	1896	1907	1920	1928	1940	1951	1961	1971
Chora		590	534	495	493	618	366	327	244
Ano Meria	927	377	386	428	457	477	422	421	388
Livadi		15	19	25	25	a	36	19	2
Rest		18	23	40	40		38(b)	11(b)	14(b)
Total	927	1000	962	980	1015	1095	862	778	646

Source: Giakakis, *Dimografika Kikladon, 1821-1971*. Census of the population, 1907, VIII. Professions, p. 408; Census of the population of Greece, 19 Dec. 1920, IV. Statistical results for Cycladic islands, Athens 1923.

a. It is included in the country's population.

b.Karavostasis (Folegandros'port).

[24] Georgios Giakakis, *Dimografika Kykladon, 1821-1971* [Demographic trends in the islands of Cyclades]. Athens, p. 45.

Six of the interviewees originate from Folegandros, an island located in the south east of the Aegean Archipelago. It is one of the islands (it is 32 square kilometres in area) that belongs to the group of Cycladic islands, situated in South Central Aegean between Milos and Sikinos. There are two major settlements in Folegandros, Chora and Ano Meria. Ano Meria is a settlement located in the western part of the island, which stretches to three kilometers and is sparsely populated. Chora is the capital city of Folegandros and it is built in at a heights of 200m. During the last decade Chora has witnessed rapid tourist development. Although Chora is the main town of Folegandros, Ano Meria has today 800 inhabitants while Chora has 500. Ano Meria is less developed and the income of the major part of its population depends on agriculture and cattle breeding.

Chora is divided into two parts. The Kastro (Castle) of which is the Enetic fortress of which the shell becomes the walls of the houses, and the Chorion which lies outside and is attached to the Kastro. The dwellings inside the Kastro are small due to limited space but the inhabitants preferred to dwell inside the Kastro because it offered protection from pirate raids. These dwellings were built side by side. Even after piracy ceased to be a threat, the new dwellings that were built outside the Kastro were equally small and identical to those inside the castle. An interviewee recalled an old saying which illustrates the importance attributed to the land rather than house: "House enough to fit and land as your gaze reaches" (*Spiti oso choreis kai gi osi thoreis*). The small number of spacious dwellings inside the Castle belong to wealthy families. Most of the houses had two storeys, but each floor usually belonged to different owners. There were 200 residences in Chora in 1888. In the school in Chora there were 80 students. There were three coffee shops, ten ovens in which every Saturday the bread for the week was baked, four shoe makers, four carpenters, two blacksmiths, three olive presses, ten windmills, one barber, and five masons. In Ano Meria in 1888 seventy families lived and cultivated their own plots as well as working on the land under the system of sharecropping in order to supplement their income. In 1920 there were 102 families in Ano Meria, 140 in Chora, 5 in Livadi, 4 in Petousa, and 2 in Aggali.[25]

The economy of the island was predominantly agrarian. Agriculture and cattle raising were the main occupations of Folegandrians. The main crops were wheat, barley and wine, which were not adequate for the population.[26] The cultivation of vineyards took place mainly in Livadi by the five to six families living there. The income from cutlery was 15,000

---

[25] Census of the population, 1920. IV. Population in Cycladic islands.

[26] Zafeirios Gavalas, *Folegandros*, p. 19.

drachmas a year. Barley production amounted to 12,000 kilos and wheat to 3,000. Tl preponderance of barley over wheat indicates the predominance of an economy of sel sufficiency. Wheat, barley and legumes were not adequate for the island's consumption. Fc two consecutive years the fields were sown with wheat, barley or mixed grain and in the thir with cotton or legumes such as beans, broad beans, chickpeas, split peas, and peas. Cultivatio of legumes was dry farming and it was called a summer crop [*kalokairino*] as the harvest too place in the summer. In Ano Meria there were two windmills in 1888 and the elementar school was built in 1863.

The most important cultivated areas of the island are located in Ano Meria and Livad (near Karavostasis) and the landowners of Folegandros who lived in Chora had their lanc holdings in these fertile areas. In Ano Meria, the declivities of two mountain peaks, Merovigl and Profitis Ilias, create plateaus appropriate for the cultivation of grain. There are homesteads located close to the fields (which were called *katoikia/thimonia*) in the locations of Theologos and Eleimon (Ano Meria) and in Livadi (5-6 families in 1888). These remote farmhouses were considered to be favourable for the careful and more productive cultivation of the land but on the other hand they were criticized because of their isolation and the fear that their inhabitants would neglect religious duties and mental development due to their distance from school.[27]

Olive cultivation was oriented towards family self-sufficiency. The annual production of oil amounted to 6,000-10,000 okades (1 oka equaled 1,280 grams), and in a good year to 18,000. Olive oil was considered essential for the well being of the family and its lack signalled a state of poverty and deprivation: "In those days there was a lot of poverty, misery. We had neither bread nor oil. They could only afford to put drops on the slice of bread and they used to spread it to reach everywhere. And we used salt instead of sugar [laugh]." [Eirini].

Small flocks of sheep, oxen and goats were kept by families, and they also raised pigs and other livestock. In 1888 there were 1,000 goats and 1,500 sheep on the island. Each family had one pig and in Ano Meria there were pig farms. They were slaughtered in December and made into salt meat, gammon and sausages. Wool and cheese were sold to Syros and Santorini while oxen, goats and sheep were bought by butchers in Santorini because of their high quality. Sheep kept and fed in houses were called *mprouzia* and were considered of better quality, and their price was double.

---

[27] See Miliarakis, *Ipomnimata geografika ton Kikladon nison: Amorgos*, p. 27; Zafeirios Gavalas, *Folegandros*, p. 20.

Village families' predominant occupation was cultivation of the land. They derived their means of subsistence from farming. Incomes were also supplemented by the knitting of flannel, from which they earned 2,000-3,000 drachmas a year. Knitting was done by women and children and it was a domestic industry that continued in the inter-war period. Knitting was a social activity done in the evening during visits [*veggeres*]. Anna remembers the teacher scolding her mother for her daughter spending her time in knitting instead of studying.

Sharecropping was the predominant system on the land. A share-cropper had to hand over half of his produce to his landlord. Most sharecroppers cultivated the lands of more than one landowner, and the right of cultivation was transmitted informally to the next generation, to the son of the lessee. As the husband of one of the interviewees stated: "My parents had been 'painted' [*vaftei*] with a plot". Most sharecroppers owned small plots of land but the produce was inadequate to support the family. Sharecropping was not limited to farming the land but extended to livestock farming especially of oxen and goats. The lessee had to hand half of the production of cheese to the owners. The obligations of the lessee to the landlord also involved more symbolic offers such as the *kalathiatiko*, which was a basketful of grapes, figs, etc. delivered to the landowner on the occasion of his children's marriage.

Domestic service was frequently connected with the system of sharecropping and the services undertaken by the daughter of the lessee were one dimension of the dependence of the lessee upon the landlord. Often the agreement between lessor and lessee included the obligation of the lessee to send his daughter as a servant to the landowner's family. Anastasia's first employer had a big field in Eleimon where her father cultivated and tended goats under the system of sharecropping. Her father gave the landlady cheese and half of the crop. Although he owned land his main income came from sharecropping and he had *koliero* with more than one landlord. Anastasia worked as a servant for the landowner in Athens for 100 drachmas a month. After two years in her service, Anastasia's father found the remuneration unsatisfactory to his daughter and he broke the agreement setting at risk the continuation of the *kolijia*. As Margarita said, "The deal was that we do the *kolijia* and I will give you the girl".

Domestic service also became linked as a transaction by which a daughter, in order to repay family debts, provided service. When wheat was insufficient, the head of the family bought a sack of flour, and due to lack of cash for payment it was bought with a mortgage loan. The mortgage was paid off by the daughter's services to the landlord. "They mortgaged girls in Ano Meria, children eight and nine years old went to service like that". [Margarita Papadopoulou]. This pattern of labour exchange is similar to one seen in the Peloponnesian

small holders' practice of hiring out wives' and daughters' labour as an exchange for the use of equipment.

IV. Family Households[28]: Entering Service

The occupations of the interviewees' parents ranged from small holding farmers and sharecroppers to artisans (butchers, cobblers, bakers, masons). In a situation in which land resourses were limited and opportunities for land exploitation or for enhancing its productivity were few, migration offered more job opportunities. The mothers of the interviewees had been in service, some had accompanied their fathers to Constantinople and had entered service there, while others migrated alone. All the interviewees' sisters went into service in Athens as did their husbands' sisters.

The interviewees from Folegandros belonged to big families. The average number of children per family was seven. The interviewees' parental houses in most cases consisted of one room and were called *monospito* (one-room house). The floor was earthen, and cooking was done in the fireplace, which was either in the same room where the family slept or in a separate room, which also served as a store. None of the interviewees slept in their own bed alone. The youngest children slept in their parents' bed while all the older girls slept together in one bed or couch and the all boys in another. The two following examples illustrate the sleeping arrangements in the interviewees' parental house not only in one-room houses but also in the rare cases of two-room houses with separate kitchens. Eva was one of twelve children in her family. In her parental house, which was a *monospito* in which the cooking was done in the fireplace, her mother put chairs with large pillows on which four girls slept next to the couch. The youngest children slept in their parents' bed, while the boys shared a separate bed. As there were six girls and six boys, the older girls were already in service when the younger ones were born. In Anna's house, which had two rooms and a kitchen, the parents slept in one room, five girls in a bed in the kitchen and the boy in a separate room. The curtains in front of parents' bed

---

[28]I will follow Laslett's terminology and classification concerning households. "The word *household* particularly indicates the fact of shared location, kinship and activity". The expression *simple family household* is used to cover what is variously described as the nuclear family (a married couple, or a married couple with offspring, or a widowed person with offspring). Thus, a prerequisite for a simple family household is the existence of the conjugal link. The *extended family household* is identical with the simple family household except for the addition of one or more member with ties of kinship other than offspring. The *multiple family households* include two or more conjugal family units connected by kinship or by marriage. Solitary units consist of a single person, or a person widowed or of unknown marital status. Solitaries do not constitute conjugal family units, yet they are assumed to be households. Peter Laslett, "Introduction: The History of the Family" in P. Laslett and R. Wall (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge University Press, 1972, pp. 28, 34.

were used to separate parents' bed from the rest of the room. Eleni gave the following explanation for such housing conditions, "In the past people were interested in the land. Because they lived from the land", which is in tune with the old saying: "*spiti oso choreis kai gi osi thoreis*".

In Folegandros and in the islands of Cyclades domestic service comprised a form of migration by the female population and a stage in their life trajectories with the purpose of amassing a dowry. The contribution of this dowry to the setting up of a new household was decisive, and for that reason domestic service was closely connected to the reproduction of the community and the local economy. The system of sharecropping and land holdings kept men tied to the land. Moreover, in periods of hardship debts were repaid by the labour of daughters in the houses of landlords. Often agreements between lessor and lessee included the obligation of the lessee to give his daughter as a servant to the landowner's family.

This model of migration required, and at the same time had as a result, the organization of migration and the creation of networks of control and solidarity in the city as well as of diffusion of information about available posts, which facilitated mobility in service employment. The Folegandrians' coffee shop was a meeting place for domestic servants in the city. Houses of Folegandrians who had settled in Athens were also meeting places on Sunday afternoons when domestic servants had a half-day off. In this way, their social contacts were restricted to the migrant community in Athens while, when a Folegandrian was out of employment, they could resort to houses of relatives and friends who had settled in Athens. These solidarity networks facilitated mobility in domestic service. The interviewees were thus a labour force well equipped to meet the needs of a new expanding market in Athens. The age for entering domestic service for Folegandrians ranged between 9 and 13, and they stayed in service between 9 and 18 years. Folegandrians had a professional attitude towards service. The majority of the interviewees had changed posts, while half of them changed between 3 to 4 posts. What is important is that, unlike the refugee population and internal migrants from mountainous Greece, Folegandrians changed posts when a higher salary was offered. Besides, when treatment by mistresses was bad, they abandoned their posts. Furthermore, those who changed posts had started at the bottom of the servant hierarchy, in the job of maid of all work in an one-servant household and reached the top of the service ladder which was the job of cook.

The majority of the interviewees found their posts through relatives in Athens, although often landowners travelled to Folegandros to seek a servant. Employers, in general, recruited servants from their place of origin or from a single place, as this enabled access to information

about the available labour. Moreover, this form of recruitment was considered by employers as a guarantee of honesty. Private postmen also undertook the role of supplying servants to Athenian houses. During the interwar period postmen in the small islands of the Aegean Sea were privately employed. They transported parcels with local products to migrants who resided in Athens and brought back goods such as coffee, sugar, rice etc. In addition, they brought from the capital manufactured objects destined for small merchants in the local community. This was an activity well adapted to the difficulties of the meagre transportation network, which deteriorated further during the winter. These parcels stuffed with food were a significant contribution to the diet of those who did not have sufficient resources for subsistence.

Postmen acted as intermediaries in the recruitment of servants and they accompanied girls to Athens, and earlier in the century in Constantinople and Alexandria. Additionally, many women from Folegandros went to Constantinople, and later to Athens, as wet-nurses. They left their children with the grandmothers and the fathers and travelled by boat. During this long journey, it was postmen who sucked the milk. Some postmen were involved in the prostitution market in co-operation with register offices many of which functioned as covers for supplying women for the sex market.[29]

The Folegandrians entered service as maids of all work in households that kept one servant. Three finished their years of service as cooks, a position which was considered the top of the servant career. They changed households three to four times and there was a move from lower-middle class (small merchants, white-collar employees) families to middle- or upper-class households (masters who held managerial positions in industrial plants or were involved in international commercial enterprises and the stock market, and executives in state or private institutions such as petrol oil companies, electricity and railway companies), which kept two or three servants. Upper-class households demanded skilled servants with previous experience in service. The least skilled job was that of chambermaid. The tasks a chambermaid performed were similar to those of the maid of all work. Serving at the table and the task of the chambermaid when there was not another servant to do this. Yet, the division of labour was not in practice as clear cut as the categories denote. Upper-class households demanded a heavy

---

[29] "I have to report that provincial postmen should be under strict control, especially in the Aegean islands, as together with the parcels of peasants they transport little girls, at the age of ten and even younger, who have no knowledge about the environment in which they will live and work, supplied by destitute or silly parents or by exploitative adults, in order to position them in families, disregarding whether these are good or bad, honest or immoral. It is absolutely necessary that the state intervene and prevent the positioning of little girls by people who are at least unqualified for this job, which requires conscientiousness. And it is well-known that there are various people, so-called agents but well-known procurers, who seduce naïve victims"; Maria Svolou, "Employment offices", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, nos. 22-23, July-August, 1925, pp.7-8.

load amount of labour, not only because the houses were large but also because the standards of housekeeping were very high. Besides, upper-class employers entertained guests once, and some times, twice a week and they had different food for lunch and dinner, thus, cooking was required twice a day.

> Not that the cook was lonely in her job. You will do bits and pieces of everything. You cannot see the other doing the chores and stay idle because you finished with the food. You have to help her. The living rooms were big, they had precious furniture with carvings. There was a lot of work to do. [Eva]

> There was a chambermaid in the house; she was a great girl. We had fun, we had a good life together, we didn't fight. One helped the other. When I didn't have work to do, I helped her, and she came to the kitchen and helped me. [Anastasia]

Some of the interviewees were accompanied by their mothers to Athens, who then worked for a short period until their daughters settled. Margarita, who entered service in 1952, found her first post through a friend of her employer who had been in Folegandros for the summer. When she visited the house in which her mother worked she decided to abandon her employers for a household with an elevated standard of living.

> After a month my mother took me on a Sunday to the house where she worked. I went and saw the people, I liked them, they had a girl one year younger than me, and they called her baby, and they also had sweets and we had sweets too. The master was a lieutenant in the police. The grace and kindness I saw stayed with me. I didn't like the place I was, there was a coal store next to the house, they were vulgar people. He had a store and he sold coal and hay. [Margarita]

The first post was for most of interviewees a low paid job in a lower-middle class household. Girls were paid less on the ground that they had not yet acquired skills. Eva entered her first post when she was nine years old in a household where her sister worked as a servant. Although she did all the chores apart from going shopping and cooking, she considered her position to be that of helper to her sister because she earned very little money. Anastasia's first post was the household of a landowner whose fields were cultivated by her father under the system of sharecropping. Her husband was a harbour officer and their house was located in Lycabettus. Anastasia was the only servant in this family, who had three children. After one year in their service, Anastasia and the employers' family returned to Folegandros for the summer and her father did not let her go back on the ground that she worked like "a mule" from morning until evening for 100 drachmas a month. He found her another post through a

cousin who worked as a cook in an upper-class household in the old centre of Athens, where she then worked as a chambermaid for 300 drachmas a month. The house was a three storey detached house with the kitchen, laundry, and the storeroom in the basement, and a servants' dwelling. On the first floor there was the living room, the dining room and an office and on the upper floor three bedrooms. Once a week the employers held a reception to which 20-25 people were invited. Anastasia left the post after six years because the employer's son harassed her. She found another post from a different cousin in a house opposite hers. Anastasia stayed for two years in her third post and abandoned it because not only did her employer put restrictions on her food but she was also "grumpy", complaining constantly about the way Anastasia did the chores: "I was not at all satisfied in this house. She was checking all the time the dishes, the glasses, everything. She was very grumpy. I've never seen in my life such a grumpy person". In the fourth post, Anastasia entered as a cook while there was also a chambermaid and a nanny for the child of the house. After thirteen years in service Anastasia returned to the island to look after her mother and father. Yet, during the Second World War, Anastasia returned to Athens when her husband was called up and entered service again. She worked for the mother of her final employer. During the war, the daughter of her employer insisted that they all move to her house because of the bombardment. Thus, Anastasia found herself in the old house where the same chambermaid still worked.

> One day a silver spoon was lost in the kitchen. We were in the kitchen with the servant of the daughter. We worked together in the past. And there was a big mess. And Mrs. Rita comes down and says: "Mum, we shall indemnify Anastasia and she will go. She can go to stay at your place". The old lady had a basement in the house where I put my trunk and my husband slept there before they took him to the front in Albania. And I said, " I am not going to this room, I will keep the key until my husband comes back from Albania. Thank you very much. I don't want anything. I don't want your money. You throw me in the streets under these circumstances", and I left. Straight away. I cried so much. I've never cried so much in my life. I didn't take any money, only my salary. [...] She wanted to say to her mother that there should be fewer people in the house.

A better salary was one of the main reasons for leaving one post for another, usually in upper-middle class houses, which employed more than one servant. None of the interviewees asked for an increase in her salary but they relied on their employers' will for a rise. Yet, from the first house to the last one in the whole period of service the increase in the salary was three to four times higher. Although the period of service lasted on average 11 years this increase was quite significant, but it could be attributed also to the shortage of servants in the interwar

period. These contracts were more favourable than those that were made for a long period of service as was the case for the rural population of mountainous Greece. In the latter case, when the contract broke, servants did not receive any money at all while the payment was agreed in the beginning of the contract. Close contact with the Folegandrian community in Athens was a source of information about posts that were considered good. All the interviewees changed employer when relatives and friends recommended a better paying post.

> There was a compatriot working in the house and she was pregnant. They were two, mother and daughter working there. And she told me, "How much do you earn". "I said 120". And she said, "Would you come with me for 150?" And I left and went to the house she worked. The boss understood [Evdoksia].

When employers recruited a servant they asked for recommendation from a previous employer. Asking for reference letters does not seem to have been the practice among employers; rather a new servant put the new employer into contact with a previous employer, although not necessarily the most recent one, instead they might refer to a mistress for whom they had worked for a short period of time during the absence of employers. The reasons for doing this were, first, that they did not want to inform their current employer that they intended to abandon their post for a better-paid one. Second, because loyalty, stability and honesty were the main requirements employers made of servants, having abandoned a post for more money undermined their bargaining capacity. The employers' demand for stability from domestic staff is indicative of the form of the labour contract. Accusing employees of theft was a form of revenge on the employers' part when servants abandoned their post. By spreading this false accusation, they tried to restrict servants' opportunities in the labour market, or indeed, more accurately, to keep service employment outside the labour market.

The return of the interviewees to the island was a parental decision connected to the care of elderly parents and to settlement through marriage, its timing was also linked to family needs. The interviewees from Folegandros did not choose their future husbands. This was a decision that lay in the realm of parental responsibility. The average age of marriage for the interviewees was 25. Late marriage following an average of 11 years in domestic service was a pattern of migration similar to that described as "life-cycle' service in which service constituted a stage of the life-cycle before marriage and had the purpose of allowing a dowry to be amassed. Interviewees' fathers managed the lump sum that they had accumulated in service and bought them a house or land.

The organization of the service profession within the community and its specific role in the economy of the island through its contribution to the setting up of new households constituted a different pattern of domestic service employment from that found in the refugee population or among other internal migrants. Folegandrian women had an instrumental attitude towards domestic service that was related to the accumulation of the dowry. They used the community networks to find appropriate posts. Job mobility was a typical feature of this instrumental attitude, which aimed at maximizing dowries. The achievement of this target had a self-fulfilling quality which meant that the interviewees could not see themselves and their lives, or the lives of their daughters, outside this economic system. As their mothers and their sisters as well as their husbands sisters', had all been domestic servants, the girls' future was and felt to be predetermined.

Domestic service was the only possible reality to escape from overcrowded conditions and from being a burden upon their families. It provided an opportunity to provide themselves with clothes, shoes and better food. It offered the only possibility to create the means for the setting up of a new household by investment in a house, land and household equipment to bring into the marriage.

> What would I miss here, my childhood here, the shoes I wore there and didn't have here, good food? Could I feel nostalgic for these lacks? [Margarita]

> -What attracted you about service when you saw your sister in Athens [working as a servant]?
> I thought, I will grow up, and by that time I will be able to wear a nice little dress and to buy a few things as I grow up. This. [Evdoksia]

Apart from the accumulation of money to function as a passport to marriage and to secure the viability of the household, moderate consumption of goods such as clothes, shoes, and household goods, so fiercely castigated by intellectuals, journalists and civil servants, accounted for the desire to enter paid employment. Domestic service offered a fulfillment of these limited desires. Furthermore relieving the parental family of their keep as well as helping younger siblings offered a certain emotional and financial gratification to those women.

Women knew that as soon as they were 9-10 years old they would migrate with the aim of accumulating a dowry in order to set up a new household. Most of them sent money to parents and they expected their daughters to follow the same path. Their aspirations were limited and, in order to achieve the target of the dowry, they restricted themselves from any pleasure that could cost money, such as movie-going and the theatre: "We rarely went to the

movies, because you needed money for the movies. And if we went to the movies then we wouldn't have money to buy the things we should buy. I must have gone five times in nine years and I had been once in the theatre" [Evdoksia]. "I went out. I went to my aunt. Where could I go? I went to the movies but when I grew older, we experienced harassment. I didn't like these things, to walk in the street and hear the teasing, I didn't like this" [Margarita]. In order not to endanger their marital prospects and virginity, they kept themselves tied to their community and they limited their horizon to the family and compatriots. Uncertainty about the future and the precariousness of a subsistence economy created a strong work ethic that involved a limited perspective on life outside labour.

Thus, for Folegandrian women participation in the labour force did not change across different periods and remained substantially the same. For the interviewees who settled in Athens as married women, service jobs as stewards, and for widows or for women whose husbands were absent, live-in service, were the only choices. Lack of networks in the city for seeking factory work, and its immoral connotations, made service the only path.

Chapter Three

Patterns of Service Employment for the Refugee Population

Contrary to the Folegandrian pattern of migration which took the form of domestic service and which aimed at the accumulation of a dowry for the rural population from continental Greece as well as for the refugee population domestic service had a completely different function in the family economy. Dependence on daughters' earnings were necessary for the survival of the family and the daughters' wages of were either consumed immediately by the family or the lump sum that women accumulated by service was entirely claimed by the family and distributed according to the current needs of the family. In most cases the money was given directly to male siblings and this arrangement constituted one of the most profound aspects of gender inequality in the family performed by parents and brothers. The management of daughters' earnings between the rural and the urban population varied.

For the refugee population domestic service was not a career but a form of child labour and an emergency solution in situations of crisis such as the war. Children who could not enter factory work due to the prohibition upon child labour under the age of 14 in industry were sent into service. The majority of the interviewees entered service between 1922 and 1940 and the majority of them stayed between four and six years in service, while two stayed for 18 and 33 years respectively. Only one interview went to service at the age of sixteen and all the rest were between six and twelve years old when they entered their first post. Factory work was preferred and women shifted from domestic service to factory work. Wages in industry were higher than in domestic service and as refugees resided in Athens there was no need to save for the expense of food and boarding. Furthermore, domestic service was stigmatized in the urban communities, and identified with prostitution and immorality as well as with poverty and dependency. The role of neighbourhood networks enabled entry into factory work. As workshops and factories were concentrated in the refugee settlements, the neighbours, personal contact and word of the mouth spread information about jobs.

Domestic service did not act as a relief upon overcrowded conditions. Women's salaries were used immediately by their parents and distributed within the family. Their participation in the labour market has to be examined in relation to the household context. It was not only in the absence of a male head of the family that women and children entered the labour market. In the majority of cases in which the wages earned by men were insufficient due to unstable jobs and inadequate rates or other factors, children and women entered the

labour market not only to supplement family income but as its main contributors. Female wages were translated into a half loaf of bread per person per day, a handful of olives, a little olive oil, and meat or fish perhaps once or twice a month.[1] The mothers of the interviewees worked as domestic servants when relatives could mind children, as in Ioanna's and Evaggelia's cases. Laundry was the most widespread occupation among women with children. Evaggelia 's mother worked as a washerwoman when her sister denied keeping the children. Aspasia's mother also worked as a washerwoman when the weaving factory in Nea Ionia closed during the war. Airtimes' mother and her eldest sister worked in a paper factory and later in a munitions factory. Shifting jobs was a typical feature of both the male and female labour force during the inter-war period. The interviewees' fathers were small holders and artisans in Asia Minor. When they settled in Greece they worked as casual labourers while their wives worked in the service sector and some worked in factories, and some even combined both forms of employment. Giving children to be fostered or for adoption was a survival strategy for these families. During the second decade of the twentieth century although legislative acts had been passed in 1912 and 1920 prohibiting child labour these were not enforced. A great number of children worked in factories. Yet, when factory jobs could not be obtained, when the legislation was finally enforced, girls and women shifted to service labour. Sending children into domestic service was also part of the resettlement policy for orphan refugee girls.

I. Family Decision-Making about Entering Service

This section attempts to illuminate the process through which girls experienced and learned the workings of the family economy, their financial relationships with their families and of the household managed and controlled by their mothers. Connected to this is examination of the process through which girls learned to perceive themselves as workers and how their education and disciplining in the family shaped a self in the service of others. This process made their acceptance of domestic service possible, which in turn, together with economic factors shaped their married lives and their roles in their own household as housewives, mothers and workers.

Nine of the interviewees belonged to the urban population. Eight were first and second generation refugees born between 1915 and 1932 and one was born in 1925 in Athens but did

---

[1] An example from the rug-industry, where wages were paid on a piecework basis (three drachmas per thousand knots), given by Morgenthau, *I was sent to Athens*, p. 250.

not originate from Asia Minor. All the interviewees belonged to big families with more than five children. The birth of a child drove a poor family further into poverty. Older children became a source of income in order to allow younger ones to survive.

Households without parents, households in which the father was the breadwinner, households in which the mother was the head of the household, and households without a mother will be used as case studies in order to connect childhood and family background with service employment and the life-cycle. Additionally, I consider the analysis of household patterns as an opportunity or a device to present the biographies of the interviewees. It is because their individual lives were so intertwined with their families that I find it necessary to pay so much attention to these structures. Education, their earnings, the types of jobs, the choice of husbands, all were sites controlled by the family. This is not to ignore that families operated within particular historical circumstances which shaped them; or to ignore the importance of the wars, migration, and the structure of the labour market as well as the role of institutions. On the contrary, I believe that the family is a privileged place to trace the intersection of these factors.

Among the refugee population many women were heads of households. 20% of the refugee families were single-mother families. It is important to pay attention to the survival strategies of these women and to their management of their households. Evaggelia 's mother was married in Vourla in Asia Minor and when she came to Athens in 1922 she had two children. Her husband had died at the front. She left the children with her sister and she worked as a servant for five years. One of the ways women dealt with children in conditions of extreme poverty was by giving them to relatives for adoption or sending them to service. When her sister started to complain about keeping the children, she gave up her job and took in washing to make a living. The younger child was given to a couple for adoption, to the brother of her sister's husband. Katina married again and had four children by her second marriage. Her second husband was a chauffeur. He was a member of the communist party and was murdered in 1936 during the Metaxas dictatorship. With the money she received from the state she gave her older daughter money and also her husband to buy a taxi. While her husband was alive she sold face-cream, a recipe she had learned from her mother, and she also did some washing. She married off her oldest daughter at the age of fourteen. When her second husband was killed she started to work as washer woman on a permanent basis. The oldest daughter looked after the children. Evaggelia describes her father's assassination through her mother's narrative:

This life was tyranny. She had gone with her sister Aimilia to sell cream.

> Because her other sister made this cream. Their grandmother in Vourla made this cream; it was such a pure thing. You can't find these things here. "Let's go, Katina, together with Milia", siblings love each other, not all of course, but the ones you match. She was a card teller; the woman they went to give the cream to. And when they entered, my mother was in confinement, and she said, "now you are here, I will tell you the cards". As soon as she gets the cards, my girl, my mother was 35-6 years old, she said, "a big trouble in your house. When you get to your house, before you enter you will hear the news. You'll disperse your children and one of your children is very lucky, she has a mark in her back". My mum says, "What have you been telling me?" "You'll not reach the house and before you'll hear the news". And it was true, she used to tell us these things. Before she reached the house, they had killed him. My older sister was looking after our little girl.

The central figure even in her telling of her father's death is again her mother. The form of the narrative reminds us of the plot and the devices of a popular fairy tale. The fortune-teller conveys the bad news. The lucky child is Evaggelia, for, as she reveals later, she has a big mole on her back. The narrative time on which she reveals this is when her mother gave her to an aunt, but she did not keep her. Luck, destiny and misfortune are used as the organizing principles to explain her mother's life. Her mother used to explain her misfortune by a vow that had tied her to a man who wanted to marry her in Vourla. He asked her to swear upon an icon that she would not marry another man, and that, if she did, she would never enjoy a man by her side ["*na min chortaksei antra sto plevro tis*"]. Evaggelia does not adopt this explanation, which her mother used to reconstruct her life. Yet, fortune and misfortune play the most important role as explanatory tools to make sense of her mother's life.

After Evaggelia's father died the older daughter, eight years old, was sent to an orphanage in Larissa. The youngest sister was adopted by a family in Crete and Evaggelia was sent to an aunt. She was five years old. Within this system of adoption a form of child exploitation was hidden.

> After that her Calvary started. Going from one house to another to wash. It was her destiny; she was not fortunate, because fortune is a big thing for a young woman, and for the man even more so. The woman who baptized the baby took her home. And my aunt Elli married, she could not have children and lived with her mother; but she couldn't have children. She gave her me. But I was bedwetting and she was very tidy. I stayed one-two years and then she said, Katina, I cannot keep this child, and she took Eleni [the other sister].
> -Do you actually remember this?
> Yes, we were big little girls.
> -How old were you at that time?
> I was six. She gave Maritsa to the orphanage, the older one. Eight years old. But then it was 1941 and we brought her back. We had put her in Larissa. What a life, eh? Do you understand this, my girl? Well, when she took Eleni, I

was her luck, for my mother. And I was her beloved child, and of course I looked after her. I've got a mole on my back, that big. What I wanted to say is that she gave out her children, and the girls complained afterwards.[...]

Evaggelia describes herself as being good luck for her mother. She probably believed that she was lucky because her aunt did not keep her. The realization of her importance, of being a helpful child for her mother, leads her to believe that her existence was a source of fortune for her mother. The sense of herself as a big little girl arises out of knowledge of her littleness and of the feeling of dependence and powerlessness, which was also reflected in the eyes of her mother, but also from a sense that she was like her mother, could do the household chores, could look after children, and could be useful to other people. The shift from the third person to the "we" shows the oscillation between the sense of shared responsibility for her mother's actions and at the same time of the power of her mother.

Let us return to her experience in her aunt's house and look closely what it meant to a child to be given away to a relative.

She was very tidy and Eleni was tormented in her hands.
-Do you remember the house?
How couldn't I? We swept floors and ironed clothes.
How old were you?
We had been working since the age of five.
[..]
-Did she want to adopt you?
Yes, she wanted; she did want.
-Despite this, you did jobs in the house.
Of course we did, otherwise why take us?
-I cannot quite understand this. If she wanted to adopt you, how could she make you do jobs?
This is irrelevant. It's completely irrelevant. In those days children did a lot of work.
-Was it there that you learned domestic chores, or did you know these before?
It was there. We were only six years old.
-What exactly did you do?
We swept the floors; we had to wash the dishes.
-Where you the only one?
Only me. But other people used to come to the house. All the family, they lived there with their mother, my grandmother. We were all there, there was a strong bond. [...] We did not consider her a stranger, how can I explain it? And then she took Elenitsa and she made her life unlivable. And now she too has nerves, she is old now as well.
-Was it because she made her do all this work?
Yes, yes, a lot of work and she used to beat her when she did not do it properly. [...] Eleni was constantly beaten, in order to learn to do the chores properly. Do you understand? She was very hypochondriac, very tidy. Very much like that. She ironed the clothes and she unfolded them and she made her

to iron them again. And she used to curse my mother. "Why did you give us away?" And she said, "you were in the streets and I was out all day and came back only at night".

This dialogue represents the closed system of domestic arrangements and economy of their household. Her mother's authority was at the same time a manifestation of restricted choices. This scene also reveals the ambivalent emotions of these children towards their mothers, feeling that their mothers did not have a choice and at the same time feeling bitterness at being abandoned in the hands of relatives and strangers. Many historians have read the "haggard, worn and tired faces of the working women of the urban poor" as "signs of victory not of failure"[2]. And they have seen as success the willingness of poorly-paid women to take on any task which might yet feed their families and maintain their unity and independence. But the way women experienced their lives suggests rather the psychological burden of dissatisfaction and desperation. For children, too, their relationships with their mothers led to generational conflict and to the shaping of their subjectivity *in difference* to their mothers.

Fostering was a dominant survival strategy for families which experienced the loss of a parent. Fostering, as is clearly illustrated by Evaggelia's and her sister's experiences and also in the narratives of the vast majority of interviewees who were sent to relatives or to strangers as foster children, was a form of domestic service. The term *psychokory* [literally "daughters in spirit" but meaning children brought-up out of pity] signifies a status similar to daughter. Yet, we should not confuse this institution with the position of daughters in their families. Although one can claim that children worked in their own families, their position, their status, and their treatment, as well as separate eating arrangements in the fostering family, can illustrate a completely different relationship. Furthermore, when children caused trouble for foster parents, they did not hesitate to send them back to their parents. Fostering was a form of domestic service, but with the worse conditions of labour and treatment.

Caring for babies was another responsibility older children undertook. Evaggelia 's mother after the death of her second husband entered into a relationship with a man who worked as a cook. She met him because she was washing the staff's clothes. She did not marry him because she would lose her pension, but he soon also died. She had a child with him. This boy was the only child in the family who not only completed school but went also to university. Panajiotis was an illegitimate child.

I brought him up. I was little and I put him on my back. Sometimes they

---

[2] Carl Chinn, *They Worked All their Lives: Women of the Urban Poor in England, 1880-1939*, p. 103.

> say...you can't imagine how much we loved him. He loves us as well. It was during the events in December, there were fights between the communists and Germans in Kaisariani and once, I was nine years old I put him on my back and slowly slowly, because my mother was out to wash and it was time to collect him from the nursery, I brought him at home. And the battle started and we could have been killed. [...] It was at the Patriotic Institution. It was in Deksameni, it was the only one that existed, the poor children went there and they gave them food, they kept them there all day.

The lack of nursery schools was one of the biggest problems for working women in Greece in the period. In 1938 there were 23 nursery schools in the whole of Greece, with a capacity of between 1,992 and 2,292 children. In the city of Athens there were only 6 nursery schools. One municipal school in the settlement of Cemetery, one state school in Peristeri, 4 established by the Patriotic Institution in Dourgouti, Nea Ionia, one in the Market, and one in Vironas and one established by Near East also in Dourgouti.[3] Although there were many articles written criticizing working-class women for leaving children unattended in the streets, philanthropic institutions and associations as well as state institutions were much more concerned with juvenile delinquency.

Evaggelia describes the domestic economy of her household and her understanding of her mother as a breadwinner. Through her responsibilities in the household she defined herself as a worker and she received praise from her mother for being a good worker. As has been shown by interviews with working-class girls, labour was the primary source of self-identity and of understanding oneself.[4] Labour was used as a description of the self, the only means to repay for one's own existence.[5]

> I want to say with this, I was nine years old and she placed me next to the washtub, because we used to wash pants, there were no panties and this sort of stuff. And I washed his pants; I was just a little kid. And when she came back they were pegged out, the sink was clean, everything done. Sink! We had the tap and under the tap there was the tin where the dirty water went and we threw it on the ground. Now I realize that they [people] are the richest, the kingdom of the world. I don't know if you understand that, it is the kingdom of the world. That's how it was in those days and I used to tell her, "Why did you give birth to me?" Tyranny, this life is great tyranny. Because it was me that she had close to her all the time, and I had to suffer all her troubles.

This shaping of subjectivity through work and caring for others created a psychic structure defined by obsession with work. An attitude that made them good workers and good wives

---

[3] Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "I prostasia tou paidiou", *Elefthero Vima*, 6 July 1938, p. 4.
[4] Carolyn Steedman, *The Tidy House: Little Girls Writing*, London, Virago, 1982, p. 120-131.

and mothers. "We washed outside in the yard, we put the wash-tub outside. She handwashed fifty sheets and a hundred shirts. She put us at one end and we washed. I still wash, I want to wash, I still do more handwashing now than use the washing machine" [Evaggelia]. Maria referred to several incidents when neighbours and workers doing maintenance works to her house praised her efficiency and high cleaning standards. At the age of 77 she insisted on maintaining very high standards in her house: "I am not bored with work. I like work. I want everything clean. I want cleanliness" [Evdoksia].

For the interviewees who belonged to the urban population the reproduction of the family depended on the labour of children. For girls who entered service as children, it was their mothers who took the decision for this, made the contacts and found them positions as servants. In addition, mothers directly received their daughters' pay from the employers. None of the interviewees was recruited through servant agencies. Personal contacts were the most important means for finding a place. The neighborhood was a focal point for making a contact. That's how Evaggelia was positioned in service:

> She [her mother] was shopping on credit from the grocer's, Sikeliotis, across the road. There was no road then. And he was a nice man, it was his wife that wasn't good. And she was shopping, and Mr Giannakakis came, he was an officer in the army, and he said, If I had a little girl to help me with the shopping. And my mother was there and she said, I will send you my daughter. That's how it happened in those days.

Evaggelia was sent at the age of nine to work as a servant. As a foster child to relatives she would not receive any money. Fostering was a survival strategy for very young children and did not involve remuneration. Yet, Evaggelia at the age of nine could be a source of income for her mother who visited the employers in order to receive her daughter's salary.

Eight of the interviewees, one third of the total, entered domestic service as foster children. Four of them were refugees and they did not receive any money. During the third decade of the twentieth century when children ceased to be employed in factories, domestic service was the only available job, as it remained outside labour legislation. Furthermore, due to the shortage of servants juveniles were widely employed by the middle-class.

During the Second World War, demand for servants did not diminish. The majority of children who were sent into service because of hunger in the urban population in wartime did not receive any payment. Three of the interviewees abandoned their posts not because they were not paid but because their employers starved them. Aspasia changed posts six times in

---

[5] Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives*, Virago 1986, p. 136 and 108.

four years, not because she was not paid but because employers starved her. Only in one house she was paid. Situations of crisis like the war became for employers an opportunity to secure cheap, or rather, unpaid labour.

Although journalists, feminists, inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation and groups involved in the protection of children campaigned for a prohibition on children under the age of 14 entering domestic service, and the director of the police as well as doctors cited several cases of mistreatment of children in service. But public and private institutions such as orphanages and the Patriotic Institution for the Welfare of the Child continued to direct children to domestic service.

The Patriotic Institution sent poor children to families to work as servants during the war as a form of resettlement policy. Eleftheria came from a refugee family with eight children who moved from Crete to Athens in 1930. Before the Second World War Eleftheria and her brother went to summer camps that the Patriotic Institution had established for poor children. In 1940, when Eleftheria was 10 years old, the Patriotic Institution positioned her as a servant after her mother asked for help for both Eleftheria and her brother because their parents could not support them. Eleftheria was told that she was to be sent to a family that would provide her with food, clothes and shelter until the war finished. Yet, because she was asked by the ladies of the Patriotic Institution to say to the family that she was twelve years old instead of her actual age, it is clear that she was sent as a servant to a lower-middle class family. Eleftheria worked for six people. She did not have clothes or shoes, she slept on the kitchen floor and her food was inadequate. She stayed in this house two years and her mother, who had handed her over to a member of the Patriotic Institution, did not know the address and or name of the family Eleftheria worked for.

Eleftheria belonged to a family of ten. Her father was a casual labourer. Hers was one of the refugee families who moved from agricultural areas to Athens in order to profit from the reparations that were given to those who settled in urban areas and registered for urban housing.[6] Initially, the family had settled in Turkish property in Crete after the exchange of populations in order to take advantage of the loans and incentives provided for agricultural

---

[6] Dritsa, "Refugees and industrialization", p. 31. Charles D. Eddy, the chairman of the Refugee Settlement Commission wrote in his report published by the League of Nations in 22 August 1928: "During three years at least, the urban refugees, urged by some strange instinct, were continually on the move. There are very few urban families which have not flitted again and again from one large town to another in order to see with their own eyes the possibilities offered by each locality visited. Advice from distant relatives and the exchange of correspondence helped to foster these movements and maintain the population in a state of effervescence, in spite of all that the authorities could do to hinder and prohibit these changes of residence which interfered with their plans", in Morgenthau, *I was sent to Athens*, p. 258.

settlement, which was given priority over urban settlement by the RSC. Through the connection of the family with the Mayor of Kaisariani, Eleftheria's father was convinced to move to Athens with the promise that he would be given a building plot in the refugee settlement even though he had already received a plot. It seems that a network for profiting from reparations and housing had developed to arrange illegal allocations. The family arrived in Athens in 1931 and, while waiting for the allocation, they squatted in a wooden shack in which they stayed until 1937.[7] Eleftheria's father gave money to the Mayor and he was allocated a plot on which he built a room. The deal was to sell the house to the Mayor and get the money. But her father broke the deal and sold it to a cousin of his. With this money he bought a plot in Ilioupolis and started to build a house, and in the meantime he rented a house nearby. The family lived in an one-room house. In the overcrowded conditions of their household strict discipline and obedience to parents were the only means to sustain the situation.

> Whatever someone said to us we accepted it. We respected it. We never said no. That's how my mother had brought up us. Because we were poor children, we had a lower intelligence, no this is not a suitable way to put it, how can I say it, we were very submissive, whatever they said was law. That's what we learned from my mother. [Eleftheria]

Their father had told the landlady that he had two children although by that time he had eight. Eleftheria remembers that they were not allowed to go into the yard in order to prevent the proprietor from finding out that there were eight children. They had to keep silent. "When my father came home, my mother signaled to us and we all went and sat on the *patari*. But we didn't speak. We were in the house, but quiet". At some point the landlady noticed that there were more than two children. "Don't these eight children have a voice? Let your children go out.' And that's how we started very slowly to go out to the yard. I want to tell you by that how submissive we were to our parents. Whatever they said it was a law. This is how we were brought up. They were authoritarian".

Girls learned in overcrowded family households to be quiet, not to speak when they were not spoken to and not to answer back and not to be around when their father was at home.[8] These skills made them good servants in the eyes of employers, and constituted a

---

[7] The shack was divided into two parts with a wooden division creating an attic. The children slept upstairs on mattresses that were removed in the morning and the space was transformed into a dining room. Downstairs was the wash tub and the brazier for cooking while the floor was earthen. Evaggelia also lived in a shack in which a wooden partition was added.

[8] The training of boys in the family was similar; See, also, Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the*

"body hexis", a set of bodily practices that reveal the inscription of power on their bodies. The alignment and response to mothers' needs and desires, and the obedience and help that was expected from children and young women in working class families, leads us to explore the relationship between family culture and education and domestic service. By growing up in a culture that was based on strict discipline, habits of obedience and humility, girls were invested with qualities that were indispensable for a good servant.[9]

Aggelina, the eldest sister, after being dismissed from a knitting factory, found a place in a wealthy household in 1940. When the war broke out her employers dismissed her. She went back to her family but her mother turned her away from the house. Family poverty and their removal from school after two or three years attendance placed restrictions upon their lives but also generated ambivalent feelings and bitterness towards their mothers. The exercise of corporal and emotional violence by their mothers, fierce language and taunts, their withdrawal from school in order to be sent to work, the total control over their lives in respect of work, earnings, marriage and constant dissatisfaction deprived them of any sense of possessing their own lives and from emotional gratification and security in their family.

Aggelina not only handed over her wages to her mother but also all the money she earned from extra work, such as washing up, or occasionally carpet cleaning for other employers. This pattern brings us to a pivotal point: the relationship between daughters and mothers. The figure of the mother lies at the core of the interviewees' narratives and constitutes an organizing principle around which all the episodes of their lives operated: lack of education, employment, marriage. All their experiences were perceived through the lens of family life and their position in service was seen as an episode of family life, whether it was instrumental - a job that provided the means to support the family financially - or a signifier of what they lacked in their families, that is, of emotional and material deprivation. The relationship with their mothers offers evidence of the emotional politics of the working-class household and the processes through which the mother figure came to encompass all the bitterness of social injustice and through which the politics of social inequality attached to the mother the primary responsibility for the wellbeing of children. The interviewees are full of ambivalent feelings towards their mothers shifting from an awareness of the limited possibilities that their mothers had to cope with to feelings of bitterness and contempt.

A shared memory of poverty and dissatisfaction is manifested in the dialogue between

---

First Quarter of the Century, Manchester, 1971, pp. 44-5.

[9] For the same argument see Pam Taylor, "Women Domestic Servants 1919-1939", *Stenciled Occasional Papers*, Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1976, p. 9.

Aggelina and Evaggelia :

> *Aggelina.* I went to school for one and a half years. And my mother took me from school. "Girls are not for letters, you have to work".
> *Evaggelia* . They were backward...
> *Aggelina.* My mother hated me. She hated me. Because I was the first child, my father loved me. I have gone through a lot because of my mother. And besides that, I looked after her; she was my mother. My father loved me and she was jealous.
> *Evaggelia.* Jealousy. They were envious women; because they came here dispossessed. I don't know.
> *Aggelina.* When they fired me from the factory, I went into service. I wasn't to go into service. We were not needy. My mother used to pinch me saying- excuse me-, "get up, whore". That's exactly how it was.
> *Evaggelia.* They were all the same. Yes, yes, yes.

> There was so much hunger that before the end of the month my salary was spent. I went to my mother and handed over the money. They were starving. My mother had eight children. I was the eldest. [...] My mother was authoritarian but it was circumstances that made her like that. [Aggelina]

> She used to say, I should become a saint. And it was true. She was both a man and a woman, and beautiful. [Evaggelia]

> I told my mother, you destroyed my life. [Eleftheria]

> I don't want to blame my mother, for God's sake. I love my family very much. I give her right on the one hand. Because I told her, "mum, why did you have all this children when you knew that you had no money?" And she said, "My daughter in those days we didn't know how to guard ourselves and our husbands were barbarous". [Eleftheria]

According to the statistics there were many refugee women who settled in Athens and were heads of households. Yet, it was not only in cases of the death or absence of a father that women became the main breadwinner in a family. The interviews show that the mothers of interviewees were in many cases the primary supporters of the family, but they also indicate that a large proportion of married women worked, especially as home workers and washer women. The instability of the labour market as well as habits such as drinking and gambling reduced the family budget and shortfalls could be met only by the labour of mothers and children. Identification of their mothers' role as breadwinners is expressed by the interviewees through a diffusion of gender roles: "My mother was both a woman and a man" [Aspasia, Evaggelia]. This understanding derives from the very practical recognition of their mothers as providers of food: "If my mother didn't work, there was no food" [Artemis]. Yet, this collapse of the gender roles in their mothers' characters was neither a denial of the gendered division of power nor a forfeiture of paternal power. Fathers exercised their right of keeping their

earnings for themselves and forced their wives and children to give them their earnings.

Artemis was born in 1925 in Athens to a family of eight children. Her parents originated from Corfu and her father worked in a tobacco factory. When the family came to Athens her father was a casual labourer and worked for a period in a quarry. The family settled in Iliopoli, where her father, with the help of friends, built a one-room house with an earthen floor and next to it a shack that was used as a toilet. The children slept on the floor. Artemis 's mother worked in a munitions factory and in a paper factory. Artemis was sent into service at the age of seven with a promise from her employer to endow her. Because her father took both his wife's and daughters' wages, Artemis' mother asked her daughter's second employer, who paid her 300 drachmas a month, not to hand her wages to her father but to put it in the bank. In any case, as women's wages were much lower than those of men, it was impossible to make ends meet with her mother's earnings. Sending Artemis into service as "*psychokori*" relieved the family of the burden of keeping her. Her sister, who was older, worked in the factory with her mother, while the boys worked with their father.

The Second World War was devastating for the poor urban population. Aspasia's parents were refugees. She was born in 1928. Her father was a cobbler but when he migrated to Athens he worked in road construction. Her mother worked in a weaving factory in Nea Ionia and as a seamstress at home. Aspasia's father did not give any money to his wife. The family relied until the war on her mother's hard labour and double shifts as a factory worker and as a home worker. During the war, her mother travelled to Greece and finally she sold everything that there was in the house, from tablecloths and linen to furniture. Aspasia went into service in order that her mother and sister could consume her portion of ration food.

Vania came from a refugee family. Her parents originated from Vourla in Asia Minor. Her mother had six children, three daughters and three sons, but it was only the girls that survived. They left Athens for Crete in 1934 when Vania was four years old. They lived in Virona where they had bought a house with bonds. Her father was a bus driver and had a taxi jointly with her aunt. However, his compatriots in Crete convinced him to leave Athens and go to Crete to a place called Atsalenio. This is another example of refugee families who moved from urban to rural areas and vice versa in order to profit not only from reparations but also so as to explore more possibilities for a better living. Besides, many refugees registered different profession from their actual one in their place of origin in order to take advantage of the resettlement policies. Vania's father sold everything and he took his family to Crete. While waiting to be allocated a plot in Crete they lived in a tent. When Vania 's mother was pregnant with the sixth child, Vania remembers:

> My mother had a very bad contraction and went to the toilet, a hole with a piece of wood around it and instead of walls it was covered with rugs. She went to the toilet and fainted and we went after her and tried to hold her. Finally, she bore this child which died and then she got ill. She had consumption. And I was an orphan at five years old. She left three children; one was ten years old, the other seven and me five. My sister brought us up. My father did not get married again. He brought us up. Then the war broke out. But I cannot forget when my mother was dying, I remember this as if it were today; even if I was then five years old. I had one shoe, and the strap was broken. I was holding one shoe in my hand and I was following the funeral. And before she died she said: "When I die, my children, light a fire and burn everything. And go to your aunts." Her sisters were in Athens, one in Kaisariani and the other in Aigaleo. "And leave your father. Don't let him ruin your life as he ruined mine". She departed bitter.

When Vania' s mother died, she worked as a servant for her teacher at the age of eight for three years. As lower middle-class households could not afford paid domestic staff, orphan girls constituted a cheap labour force for this type of household. For a poor family like Vania's, service was not a source of income for the family but provided the means for a child's survival. Her father viewed domestic service as an apprenticeship for acquiring domestic skills in order to enter paid employment as a servant. The arrangement between her father and the teacher did not involve remuneration.

> I have been tired since I was a little child. In Crete I was in the teacher's house and I did everything. I nursed her child, I cooked, I cleaned; I did everything. And when I went to school, the teacher took me, she loved me very much and said, whoever does not want it, because they gave bread with raisins, whoever was from a well-to-do family, to give the bread to Vania. There was one who didn't know how to read. And the teacher told her. Niki, Vania will help you with reading and you will give her food, because she has to eat.

Vania came to Athens when the German forces of occupation retreated. She went with her sister to her aunt's house. Her aunt worked in the Emergency hospital and washed the clothes of soldiers. She found her a post in service in 1946 during the civil war. Her mistress was a teacher and the husband was a traffic policeman.

II. Wars and Institutions

The process of construction of nation states in the Balkans and the decade of wars had tremendous repercussions for the populations subjected to these transformations: great migrations and removals of populations, massacres, loss of property and loss of members of families. It was in the vortex of the great transformations of the early twentieth century Balkans that the interviewees and their families found themselves, facing experiences of

dislocation, loss of people and property, and rape. These experiences marked their lives. The memories of these experiences and the narratives constructed about loss and dislocation were vital for healing the trauma.[10] These memories were transmitted from generation to generation and were, and are still, recounted very often in family gatherings. These narratives constituted available forms to express different future experiences of suffering and, also shaped the way these other experiences were handled and understood. These narratives of suffering were not only a form of healing but also sharpened awareness of one's own existence. One of the most dramatic consequences of the war was that thousands of orphan children whose parents had been killed in the war were abandoned by relatives in the surging wave of population removal. The wars became the most important chronologies, the landmarks that organized the narrative of the past.

The war in Asia Minor resulted in a tremendous flood of refugees, of whom the major proportion were women, children and elderly people. Institutions and organizations such as the Patriotic Institution and the Near East Relief, which undertook the resettlement of refugees, directed a large proportion of women and children to domestic service. The situation of crisis and desperation for the refugee population and its handling by these institutions resulted in a substantial market in juvenile domestic servants from which middle-class and lower middle-class families benefited.[11] Through the mediation of institutions refugee women, and especially orphans, constituted a cheap labour force that could provide moderate households, previously unable to afford servants, with domestic staff. The Near East Relief took responsibility for 16,108 children, who were transported to Greece and distributed them to nine centers. The dwellings were allotted by the Greek government.[12] Additionally, it established orphanages for orphan refugees.[13]

Evdoksia originated from Pontus. Her brother's wife abandoned Evdoksia and her sister. As orphan children they were transferred to the orphanage for girls in Chalki. Due to chicken pox, they stayed in quarantine on the boat for a month. The boat came straight to

---

[10] Dominique LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss", *Critical Inquiry*, no. 25, Summer 1999, pp. 697-727. "Trauma, Absence, Loss", *Critical Inquiry*, no. 25, Summer 1999, p. 698.

[11] In the minute book of the Police Headquarter of Piraeus there are several entries of domestic servants of unknown surname; Minute book of the Police Headquarter of Piraeus, 1941-1942. Aristotelis Koutsoumaris refers to several cases of orphan children of unknown surname who were employed as servants that reached the police stations. These were refugee children either recruited from asylums or privately; Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation of little servants: Measures that have to be taken", *Ellinis*, no 6, 1934, pp. 195-203.

[12] Minstry of Foreign Affairs, Leauge of Nations, folder 1/84.

[13] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, League of Nations, folder 3/65. Telegram by Tsamados, 20-1-1924. The total number of refugee children in orphanages was 10,132. In Oropos orphanage 884, in the Old Palace 450, in Syros 2,009, in Corinthos 1,907, in Chalkis 1,345, in Corfu 1,417, in Cephalonia 567, in Cavala 578, in Thassos 163.

Piraeus and the children were housed temporarily in the Old Palace.

> When they brought us to the Palace, the ladies fell on us and took children in [*pesane kai pairnane*]. Some children were adopted, while others were taken in to see if they are good and then... One of them took me to Thisseio after a while...She was married, and when I went she had a little boy, five years old. I remember I saw the contract she made with the orphanage, they had a contract that she would protect me until marriage. But she was a very tough woman. She could see that I was a child and she could overlook things. She made great demands on me. She was a midwife.

Evdoksia's experience illustrates and confirms the way in which orphan children from Asia Minor became an army of cheap labour for households of lesser means.

> -Did you do the chores?
> That's why she took me, to work, she wore me out, she worked me like a dog. She knocked off my bottom.

The contract between the humanitarian organization of the Near East Relief and the employer involved remuneration until the girl got married. Evdoksia received only a sewing machine from her employer as compensation for seventeen years service. This sewing machine, which Evdoksia's employer had acquired after the woman who owned it died, was accounted at 12,000 drachmas, a price that did not correspond to its actual value.

> I was a little girl but she had great demands. It didn't matter that I was little; they tortured us when we were in "alien hands". Don't look know, the servant is more noble than the mistress. You were afraid of talking to her. Those days it was different, they had you for a penny. She took me for a few drachmas a year. In the beginning, one year or two, she had me for free, and then for a few drachmas.
> -Who was in charge to check her?
> The orphanage.
> -Didn't she adopt you?
> No. She had a contract that she would protect me. Who was going to control her? Afterwards the orphanage closed down

Her employer turned her out of the house before the Second World War. She sent her to relatives to work for the summer and she didn't want her back after she fell ill from pleurisy. Then a nun found her wandering in the streets and gave her shelter. Through the neighbourhood, she found another post in which she stayed for 15 years. It was a typical attitude of employers to release domestic staff when their financial interests were at stake. Another two interviewees were fired as soon as the war broke out, while it is well documented in police records, in the conduct books addressed to employers and in the study made by Paspatis that illness was a reason to dismiss domestic staff.

Aggeliki was born in Fokaies in Smyrna in 1916. When the Turkish army entered Smyrna in 1922, the inhabitants of Fokaies became war prisoners. Her baby sister was thrown in the fields and she lost another sister when soldiers kidnapped her. The able-bodied men were segregated and her father and brother were killed. After a long march the prisoners reached Ikonio, and Aggeliki was adopted by a Turkish family. She lived with six families before she finally arrived in Greece, on the island of Poros. After two years she found her sister who worked as a servant in Athens through the Red Cross. A compatriot of her sister who also worked as a servant took Aggeliki to her employer's house as they wanted a girl to serve at the table. Her employer was an MP who kept 4 servants all refugee children. None of the servants was paid and this is one more example of refugee children becoming a unpaid labour force for middle-class families, and not solely for lower-middle class households. Yet, not only were they not paid, but their food consisted of tea in the morning and half a kilo of bread for lunch and dinner. Her sister, who worked in the house of a tobacco industry owner, jumped out of the window and killed herself. As the newspapers wrote that she had scars in her face and throat, Aggeliki believes that the son of her employer had attempted to rape her.

It was not only orphan children but also women who came from Asia Minor with their families and whose husbands were either killed in the war or returned after the war that were directed by relief organizations into domestic service. Ioanna's mother was sent into service by the Patriotic Institution.

Ioanna's family came from Smyrna in 1922. Her father was prisoner of war and her mother, with the children and her two elderly parents, were located first in the aircraft depots in Palaio Faliro. When houses to accommodate refugees were built in Nikaia Ioanna's family was allocated a room. Her mother went to the Patriotic Institution to ask for a job. Knowing that the Patriotic Institution made clothes for the refugees she asked for a sewing job:

> And when my mother went to the Patriotic Institution she saw a compatriot from Magnisia who was a very educated woman, from a well-to-do family. She knew my mother very well, and all our family. [...] And my mother said, I have come to ask for a job. We are seven people and we don't have anything. Nobody is able to work, neither my father and mother nor my sister who is almost blind. And I have three children. And she said, I will introduce you to a lady, Miss Fotiadis, from one of the best families in Athens. There is nothing more to say. I will be responsible to answer to your husband for where you worked and what you did as a servant.

Her mother worked for the family of Fotiadis, which consisted of an elderly woman and her five children, three daughters and two sons. In that family the role of the breadwinner was assigned to one of the brothers, who was an engineer and director of an electricity company

(Powel). They all lived in the same house and four of them were unmarried while the fifth son was divorced and had returned to the parental house. Because of this arrangement, Ioanna's family called the house the "asylum for elderly people". Ioanna's family would be tied to the Fotiadis family until the death of its last member.

When Ioanna's father returned from the front, Giannis Fotiadis found him a job and gave furniture and clothes to the family. Ioanna's mother was a live-in servant for the family and while she was working her children stayed with the grandparents. When her husband returned from the front they were allocated a house in Kokkinia. In the meantime Ioanna became seriously ill from enterocolitis because of bad water was brought by the water cart to Kokkinia. One of her mother's employers, Kalliopi, advised her to take Ioanna to the Children's Hospital. In the hospital Kalliopi visited Ioanna every day, and after two months, she insisted that Ioanna should stay with them because the living conditions in Kokkinia might aggravate her health: "'you will bring Ioanna to us'. Their mother was seventy years old and she had problems as an old person. 'Whatever mother eats, so will Ioanna'. And I stayed until my father returned."

An opportunity was created for this well to do family without a young member to look after its elderly members and acquire a loyal child bound to them with bonds of fictive kinship who would look after them in the future. The support provided to Ioanna's father and during her illness by her mother's employers was not given for free. It was repaid with their daughter's service for life. Ioanna became the object of a transaction between her father and the Fotiadis family.

> In the meantime they wanted to keep me. They loved me so much that they said, Ioanna will not leave. We don't have children and we are not going to have, we will marry her off, give her a dowry, we'll do everything. But my father said, no, my child hasn't gone to school. She left from Turkey where she had attended the first grade. I will take my daughter. I haven't seen her; I want to leave with my children. I was to go to the fourth grade. But they insisted. Then the youngest, who was a teacher, undertook my education and she took all the books of the fourth grade and she started to teach me, mathematics, grammar... We went upstairs every afternoon and she taught me the lesson. In the meantime, when my father returned he went to meet Fotiadis. Giannakis was our protector. He said, Panajioti, I want you. Can you come to my room? He went, he had a four-fold wardrobe, he opened it and he took out suits, winter and summer, coats, underwear, shirts, ties even a hat, shoes, socks, everything. He literally dressed him and he found him a job in Powel, and he stayed for twenty-five years.
> [...]
> -Why didn't you continue school? Did your father decide that you should go to Fotiadis?
> They decided. We were tremendously obliged to them. But he knew that he put

me in a "university", that's what this family was for me. So, on Giannis' name day, he said we would go to give our wishes to Mister Giannakis. He adored me. He used to call me Miss Please. Whatever he said, I replied with "yes, please". So we went. In the meantime, my mother prepared my suitcase. Underwear etc.
-Hadn't they told you anything?
That moment; to see what I would decide. But, I didn't resist at all.
Panani, Panajioti, Ioanna is now our child. We won't give her back to you. Now that you have brought her, you cannot take her back.
-How did you feel?
Nothing. I loved them, my child. [...] I had to live with that, that I would grow up with these people. And I stayed for 18 years.

The lack of emotions encountered in the interviewees' recounting of the moment of separation from their families and entering the employers' house has to be seen in relation to a child's understanding of her position in the family and to her awareness of her role in a specific social arrangement and its embedded power relationships. The perception of class dynamics in the unequal relationship of Ioanna's family with the Fotiadis' family throws light on the complexity of class relationships in domestic service, but also on the production of class habitus. The house Ioanna where stayed while she was ill was a social space where subjects who were socially distant came into close contact. In this house Ioanna had seen her mother serving the Fotiadis family and her father arriving in rags and unemployed. These relationships were a resource of forms of identity displayed and performed in the employers' household. The form of power that is exercised in inter-personal face-to-face relationships is defined by Bourdieu as symbolic power:

> Symbolic violence, the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognized as such, and is not so much undergone as chosen, the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety –in short all the virtues honoured by the code of honour- cannot fail to be seen as the most economical mode of domination, i.e. the mode which best corresponds to the economy of the system.[14]

In the unequal relationship between her parents and their employers Ioanna perceived herself as an object of a transaction between them. A deep feeling of obligation arose out of the material goods that were given to her father and presented as gifts by the employers' family. The provision of these goods was performed in the context of a paternalistic relationship between her parents and the Fotiadis family who appeared as protectors. These gifts were repaid not by Ioanna's labour but by the disposition of herself to the service of others (" And I

---

[14] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, p. 192.

made an effort to behave as best as I could towards them"). Furthermore, inhabiting the employers' household, Ioanna was brought close to bodies and dispositions that were different from those she experienced in her close family, and which could not but be linked to the positions occupied in social space. The disparity between the bodies that inhabited the employers' house and her father's body led to her experiencing his body with unease and embarrassment.

> We all were obliged to them. We were so much obliged to this family, my child. We couldn't negate it. And the lottery fell on me. Of course I was deprived of my family, school, this and that. But I felt how immensely we were obliged to this family. Do you know what it means to see your father arriving in rags and leaving like a gentleman from a house? With shoes, socks, everything, everything. We couldn't do otherwise; I felt it. I felt the obligation. And I made an effort to behave as best as I could towards them. And they recognized my effort. I told you I didn't do the heavy jobs but I waited on visitors; offered the tea and everything. [...] That's why I tried to do whatever I could.

The meaning attached to service was determined by the hierarchical relationships between Ioanna's parents and Fotiadis family. The symbolic violence exercised by Fotiadis upon Ioanna's parents shaped Ioanna's understanding of social hierarchies and of her family's subordinate position in this relationship. The meaning of the service provided by Ioanna was determined by the position of her family in the social world. Service was the repayment of her family's obligations towards Fotiadis. Furthermore, service was understood as an attribute of the self not as a job; serving was a subject position not the performance of domestic labour. The emotional investment in the relationship with her employers is testified not only in the expression of emotions but also in her life-long attachment to this family as repayment for the debt owed by her father to her employers. Thus, having internalized this positioning and role in the family economy, resistance had no place and emotions were felt to be superfluous.

The Fotiadis family imposed restrictions upon Ioanna's contact with her family and with the world outside their own family. Her father removed her from the Fotiadis family when she was 26 and arranged her marriage because he realized that Ioanna's employers intended to keep her as a servant for life. Ioanna returned after her marriage to offer her services to one of the daughters who was left alone in the house after the death of her siblings. She moved in with her husband and daughter for six years, until the death of her employer. She received 300 sovereigns although Ioanna considered herself stupid for asking for so little money. Her sense of duty to this family justified her low financial demands and her great devotion: "I did my duty to this woman in whose hands I grew up, and I loved them and they

loved me". When the doctor praised her devotion to the family she replied: "It is my duty. They are my second parents these people". Thus, her life-long service to the Fotiadis family was achieved through their fostering and bonds of fictive kinship. These bonds, which were based on the exercise of symbolic violence, made financial demands unethical. Affective bonds entailed that the caring for others was a manifestation of a self devoted to the needs of others and not the outcome of economic calculation.

III. Changing Posts

For the working classes of the urban population, and especially for refugees, the enormous difficulties of new settlement in Athens, the precariousness of jobs due to an unstable labour market and the size of families (the majority had more than 5 children) created an immediate need of cash. Sending a daughter into service or factory work was intrinsically connected with a direct contribution to the family budget, and not solely for the sake of relief from overcrowding or from the expenses that a child entailed. All the interviewees either directly gave the money they earned to their parents or their mothers collected their daughters' wages directly from the employers. Male unemployment and inadequate wages had as an effect the entry of women and children into the labour market.

Due to low wages shifting jobs was a typical feature of both the male and female labour force during the inter-war period. In the second decade of the twentieth century although legislative acts had been passed in 1912 and 1920 prohibiting child labour these were not enforced. A great number of children worked in factories. When factory jobs could not be obtained, girls and women moved into service labour. Sending children into domestic service was also part of the resettlement policy for orphan refugee girls.

Before the wide enforcement of the prohibition on factory work by children under 14 years old, a large proportion of children worked in factories. At the age of eight Aggelina worked in a small workshop sticking labels on bottles of lemonade, and aged 11 she worked in a paper bag workshop. The employment of children entailed their removal from school. It is indicative that none of the interviewees finished primary school and the majority left school at the age of eight. This pattern is confirmed in the economic studies of agricultural communities as well by inquiries carried out in factories in which a large proportion of women were illiterate - amounting in some rural areas to 90%. At the age of 14 Aggelina entered a woolen factory and worked two shifts, receiving 66 drachmas a day. Aggelina was dismissed from the factory when she was found playing at being a phantom in the factory in order to amuse her fellow workers. After the factory she found a post as a servant. A friend of hers abandoned her

post in order to get married. Her mother visited the employer every month in order to receive Aggelina's salary. During the war she was dismissed, but her mother turned her out of the house and she returned to her employers.

For the rest of the interviewees who were part of the refugee population domestic service marked their entrance into the labour market. As we have already seen, none of the interviewees found their post in service through the registry offices. Networks in the neighbourhood, and institutions for the protection of children, as well as relatives provided contacts to households who needed servants. The shortage of domestic service in the inter-war period and the enforcement of labour legislation on child labour led to middle-class households employing children. The majority of the interviewees from a refugee background were sent into domestic service by their mothers because they were too young to work in a factory. Later they were removed from service and became factory workers. They started doing auxiliary jobs such as sweeping the factory. Evaggelia left service when she was 13 and worked in a woolen factory in Pagrati. Her job was to sweep the floor and cut threads. She stayed at this factory for seven years. Next then she worked for fifteen years in a knit underwear factory. Eleftheria worked after the war in a hosiery manufacture as an unskilled worker and later in a knit underwear factory at the stitching machines. Later she worked as a skilled worker in glove making. As did the majority of the interviewees she took in work at home after the factory. Vania worked all night long in a workshop in which they made glass for paraffin lamps. Before her marriage, Vania worked in the same factory as Evaggelia in glove making, at Gardoufa's in Agia Eirini. Before that she worked in a glass-making workshop during the night. She also worked at Metaxas distillery factory. She worked for 5 years in factories and, when she got married she stopped working. The interviewees worked in cotton-spinning and woolen factories, in hosiery manufactures, in glove-making, in glass-making, and in the distillery industry. The majority of the interviewees did not have insurance when they started to work. When inspectors from the Institute of Social Insurance controlled the factories, the employees left by the back door and were even hidden under the benches. Aggelina cut her finger when she was cleaning the factory from the nap while the machines were in operation. Aggelina's father received 15,000 drachmas in order not to prosecute the owner.

Training was done in the factory and many did not reach the machines. They started with auxiliary jobs or with ironing and button making in workshops. Wages in factories were higher than in workshops, yet initially they were employed as "apprentices" and their wages were much lower than adult female wages. In factories higher wage rates could be found in

hat making and in mills, while in workshops in tailoring, hat making and fur, flower, feather and men's underwear. The lowest wage rates were in dressmaking, in women's hat making and underwear.

Changing posts in domestic service and shifting to other forms of labour such as factory work depended on several factors. The needs of the family constituted an important factor. During the war domestic service was a solution for families who could not support all their members. Eleftheria was literally kidnapped by her sister from the employer's house to which she was sent during the war because they mistreated her. She stayed for a period with Aggelina's employers doing errands. But the employer's daughter was jealous and they sent her back home. Eleftheria was begging with her brother in the streets during the Occupation. Yet, she remembers her reaction when was to be sent to a second post in service:

> A relative of my mother, a cousin, who saw me, said, Aftroditi, why don't you give me the child to send to my boss who has a good family and she will live well there? As soon as I heard it, I said I am not going anywhere. I didn't want to go. Don't give me away, I was saying to my mother, and I went to hide under the bed, in order not to give me away. [...] Finally, she called my sister, and told her that it is a good house, that aunt Stefanos will take her to the house etc. Finally, they took me to this house. [Eleftheria]

Eleftheria stayed with this family for three years, but then her mother removed her in order to get her savings. Putting girls into factory work meant that their parents could benefit from their children's earnings immediately. Domestic service was a solution for children who could not enter a factory due to their age and whose families could not even provide food. Additionally, factory work offered training and skills that could lead not only to a higher wage but could be used in married life. And as we shall see, the majority of the interviewees who were factory workers continued to work after marriage, either in the factory or at home, but using the skills they had acquired in the factory.

> My vocabulary started to change as well as my life. I went to our house and it looked so ugly to me. I didn't want it. I had started to like this life. [...] She [the employer] let me go to my parents once a month. But I didn't want to go. My mother was very poor. Our house had been burnt during the revolution [civil war] and my mother was left with the beds. [...] And my mother came to the mistress and said: "I will take my child because I want her to learn a skill, to become a seamstress". [...] I was begging my mother not to take me from this house but she finally took me. [...] And I went back and I fell into misery again. I couldn't bath; my clothes were dirty. I had a nice life there, clean; I had my room. My father had rabbits and they were under my bed. I was sick of them and scared. It was a prison for me. I never entered my family again, my mother; I never entered. And I made her understand this. I told her later that you were my catastrophe. As soon as my mother took me back, she took the

> 700 drachmas I had in the bank and she paid her debts at the grocery, she bought chairs and a table and she bought clothes for my brother and left 50 drachmas. And she put me in a hosiery manufacture.

"Distanciation" from the family household through the experience of service was a necessary condition for reflection. "Reflection", Paul Ricoeur argues, "is never first, never constituting -- it arrives unexpectedly like a 'crisis' within an experience that bears us, and it constitutes as the subject of the experience".[15] The experience of service in this particular household appears as a new mode of living which created distance from what was known until that experience. It also provided the girl with the means to critically assess the function of the family economy and the effects of the constrains of poverty not only on conditions of living but on her own development.

After she left domestic service Eleftheria worked in a hosiery manufacture. The factory also made men's shirts and initially she ironed collars and later she did the buttoning. Later she worked in a knit underwear factory in stitching, without insurance, and from there she moved to a glove workshop where she worked before and after her marriage. Then she worked at an atelier as a seamstress for eighteen years and also took work at home.

Eleftheria gave all her money to her mother. As she says: "I didn't have the right to keep even a drachma to paint my shoes". Children's labour and earnings were not their possessions but belonged to their parents who disposed them according to the current needs of the family. When Evaggelia was removed from service she worked also in a knit underwear factory. She handed most of her wages to her mother and kept some money to buy household goods by installments. In the evening she helped her mother with the washing she took in. Evaggelia and her husband waited for eight years marry because her mother-in-law insisted that one of her daughters had to be married first. Underlying this "customary attitude", which dictated that the marriage of a daughter had to precede that of a son, lay the threat of the loss of the son's earnings and his contribution to the dowry of his sister. Men handed their wages to their mothers. The absolute authority of parents over children was exercised over sons as well as daughters, even though daughters were constructed as inferior beings on the basis of being females. The norm of chastity and their position as carers were gendered specific characteristics that defined their suppression and subordination, as we shall see later.

Aristotelis Koutsoumaris refers to a similar case to Eleftheria's, of a mother who resorted to the public prosecutor demanding to withdraw her daughter from service in order to

---

[15] Ricoeur, *Essays*, p. 107.

appropriate her wages:

> In 17 March 1933 Kiriakoula, wife of K.X... was arrested and committed for trial before the magistrate's court for public disorder she had attacked her daughter Kalliopi because outside the public prosecutor's office and hit her with her fists and kicked her all over her body. As the public prosecutor Mr Goufas verified after examination, Kalliopi was attacked by her mother because she would not consent to give her mother the money she had in the savings bank from her wages and which she had kept for the preparation of her dowry. It is worth noting that few days previously she gave 5,000 drachmas to her parents after they exercised pressure on her, although they were not needy. Because she refused to give them the rest and because Mr D. whom she served supported this refusal, her mother did not hesitate to resort to the Public Prosecutor's office demanding assistance to remove her daughter from the above-mentioned house because she claimed that she was in danger of being corrupted. But because her claim proved false and the Public Prosecutor allowed her daughter to stay with the family, immediately the mother left the Public Prosecutor's office, and attacked her daughter abusing her violently.[16]

Restrictions imposed on contact and food by employers were major reasons for abandoning a post. Aggeliki changed post when all the servants abandoned the MP's house because they had only bread for lunch and dinner. In her second post she was not paid, but the employers promised to marry her off if she stayed with them. Although the conditions were better in comparison to her first post, the promise of a dowry was a precarious one. It meant that if she abandoned her post Aggeliki wouldn't receive any money for her services.[17] She left service and went to Crete to stay with an aunt, the sister of her mother. In many cases, employers restricted contact with the outside world in order not to be deprived of a good servant.

The restriction of contact exercised by employers aimed in many cases at eliminating servants' marriage prospects. Such was Ioanna's case when she was "adopted" and her employers promised to her parents that they would marry her off and give her a dowry. When

---

[16] Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation of little servants", p. 198.

[17] Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, Director of Police Headquarters of Athens and Pireaus, referred to several incidences of such contracts that were broken by employers in order not to pay servants' wages: "In 28-8-1933 a girl 14-15 years old was brought to the Criminal Investigation Department, because she was found wandering in the streets. There she said that her name was Theodoula, of unknown surname, and that she was a refugee, orphan from father and mother and that she was taken at the age of seven from the asylum in Mitilene by the notary of Piraeus A. P. in whose house she stayed as a servant since then until a week ago, when he handed her to a register office to find her a post in another house. In the archive of the Department it was found a report of the notary who stated the above mentioned with an addition that he could not keep her anymore in his house 'because of her contact'. Yet, the officers of the Department ascertained that she was a girl of a good character and that she had trachoma and was in risk of being blind because she was not under any therapy, while all about bad contact were just excuses because it was reported that 'it seems that after seven years in his service, he [notary] wants to avoid her payment and expelled her without compensation'"; Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation..., pp. 199-200.

she reached the age of twenty-six and her parents realized that the employers had no intention of arranging a marriage, they removed Ioanna and engaged her to a man she had never seen before. After her marriage, Ioanna returned to her employer's house to look after the family.

The limitation of contact with the outside world, although a structural aspect of domestic service, was also a form of control through which employers ensured total submission to their needs and enforced their authority over staff, eliminating any sense of autonomy and individuality. Vania was employed by her teacher without being paid:

> In those days they had you, what can I say, without paying you, for a plate of food and for a few clothes they made you. She took me to her sister's; she had a country house. In those days there weren't hoovers, you swept the floor and scrubbed it on your knees, and they wanted you to scratch the corners. They wore us out in this house. Her sister had a girl as well and she didn't let me go to my sister's marriage and I fled. I convinced her and we left together, we went to our homes. In those days there were the Germans, and there was wire everywhere and we crawled and we passed under the wire. How did we do that? [Vania]

Demand for servants did not decrease during the Second World War. On the contrary, the war created a labour force of children and young women who hired their labour for just food. Crisis created opportunities for middle-class employers to make the most exploitative of labour contracts. Aspasia came from a refugee family. Her father, who was a worker in road construction, died during the war. The weaving factory (Moutalaski) in which her mother worked in Nea Ionia closed and she started to work as a washer woman while continuing to work as a seamstress at home. She sold everything in the house and the only thing left was the mattresses. Aspasia's aunt, who worked in a cotton mill, introduced her to the vice-director of the factory who was looking for a servant. The agreement did not involve remuneration, but only food and boarding. She stayed for fifteen days but because the employers locked the food away and the quantity she was given was minimal she left. She found another post through the greengrocer. She stayed for a year, again without being paid. Tests of her honesty did not involve money or valuables but food.

> They put a little plate in the kitchen with currants. I said to myself, there is no way that they just forgot it there. They entered the kitchen but it stayed there. I understood that they had counted the currants to see if I would eat them. I didn't touch it although I was hungry. I had a little bit of food in this house. I stayed for a year and then I left.

From this house she went to Filothei, an upper-class district of Athens, but the conditions were worse in terms of food:

> They were very mean. They had the living room locked and the sweets inside. The lady went to play the piano and when she finished she called me to take the empty plate. Couldn't she give me a spoonful of sweet once?

She left and one of the neighbours employed her. This was the only house in which the employers did not put restrictions on food and in which she slept in a room. In the rest of the houses she slept in a corridor, in the *patari*, or in the storeroom, which was underground. The *patari* was a small store place in the ceiling of the kitchen or bathroom accessed by a ladder and by crawling because it was too shallow to stand. Aspasia changed posts six times. After the war Aspasia found a job in the *Kopi Rafi*, a factory making army clothes in Perissos which was known for cruel conditions of work, and later as a spinner in a spinning factory (EVIP) in which her aunt worked.

Cultural perceptions of domestic labour in the refugee working-class community and its association with prostitution and destitution, account for the removal of women from service after their engagement. We have already seen that the refugee community shared these beliefs and men forced women to retire from service when they entered a relationship that aimed at marriage. As with Aggelina, Aspasia's fiancée asked her to leave service and find employment in a factory. The interviewees from the refugee settlements in which industrial plants had concentrated shifted to factory work. The refugees from Nea Ionia were often employed in the mills of Perissos and Nea Ionia. These factories used predominantly female workforce. Kin and neighbourhood networks facilitated the recruitment of new workers. At the same time, the managerial staff of the factory used these networks to recruit domestic servants for their own households. As we have seen, Aspasia's mother worked in the weaving factory and two of her mother's sisters in spinning and cotton mills. Aspasia's sister worked in a silk factory after the war when she stopped looking after Aspasia's children.

Chapter Four

Patterns of Service Employment for Rural Migrants from Continental Greece

I. Family Backgrounds and Decision-Making

All the interviewees from continental Greece entered domestic service as foster children, four of them between the ages of 6 and 7 and one at the age of 10. The institution of fostering constituted an informal form of adoption that aimed not so much at securing cheap labour but at establishing a contract of life-service based on bonds of fictive kinship. Fostering, as a strategy of employers was oriented towards the future, and constituted an investment that aimed at securing care in old age as well as care of future generations. Based on loyalty and on ties of affection, fostering blurred the boundaries between employment and kinship. On the part of poor people it was a strategy to attach their daughters to people of a higher social class with the prospect of an endowment or a lump sum after the death of the employer. Children who entered this contract and relationship as *psychokores* experienced the worst form of exploitation and psychological and corporal abuse. The precariousness of this type of contract as well as its basis in gender inequality in the family, expressed in the unequal distribution of resources, denied these girls possibility of any benefit.

This pattern of domestic service deviated from the institution of service that was firmly and intrinsically embedded in the local economy, as in Folegandros and the other Cycladic islands. In these islands both the profession of domestic service and migration were organised by the community, and its networks of solidarity in Athens functioned as a safety valve for children and young women against mistreatment. Until the 1960s, for peasants with very little property, domestic service acted as a strategy to create ties of fictive kinship with people of higher social status in order to secure the endowment of girls. The contract between the employers and the child was made by the parents, who either directly received their salary or, more often, arranged that a certain amount of money be received at the end of the period of service.

Galini originated from Gargalianoi, which belonged to the province of Trifilia and to the prefecture of Messinia. The area of Messinia witnessed a great migration movement to the United States during the 1901-1912 period. 70% of the male population between 40-60 years

old in 1936 had migrated to the States.[1] The amount of money sent as remittances started to decrease due to the economic crisis but also because migrants had acquired their own families abroad. Remittances were used for buying land and for the dowries of female members of the family. After the introduction of laws restricting migration those who migrated to Athens were mainly employed in the civil service, in the police and in the Electric Company, that is, as white-collar workers. Peasants, especially from the poor mountainous villages of Trifilia and Arkadia, supplemented their income with waged labour in currant vineyards and migrated seasonally to work as builders and milliners. Occupied in agriculture or cattle raising, they migrated in groups during the agricultural low season. The villages of the province of Trifilia were the poorest in the wider area of Messinia and witnessed major migrations to the United States at the beginning of the century. A large number of young women from villages of Trifilia and from Tripolis were sent as servants not only to Athens but also to the nearby urban centers.[2]

In mountainous areas small land holdings and thus self-supporting cultivation based on family labour, as well as the semi-monetized organization of agricultural production, were the dominant economic system. The main crops grown on the plains were raisins, olivetrees, and figtrees while grains and legumes were the main cultivations in mountainous areas.[3] Sharecropping arrangements were rare and occurred only where the landowner was no longer resident in the village.

All the members of the small holders' families were occupied on the land and when the agricultural production was not adequate for the subsistence of the family, its male members were employed as bakery workers or cobblers for a low wage ("apprenticeships" for 5 drachmas and adults for 50 drachmas) while the wife and daughters continued to work the land. Women worked both on the family plots and in waged agricultural labour. The wages of men in agricultural work were 50-80 drachmas, while those of women were 30-40. During plowing, when the family lacked a plow, it was borrowed and exchanged for the labour of the

---

[1] N.E. Aivaliotaki, *O kampos tis Messinias kai ai oreinai lekanai aftou*, Arxeion Georgooikonomikon Meleton tis Agrotikis Trapezis tis Ellados, Athens 1942, p. 63.

[2] Ibid., pp. 63-71.

[3] In the mountainous basin 47.2% of the total cultivated lands were orchards out which 18% were currant vineyards, 16% vineyards for wine production, 66% fig tree groves, and olive groves. Grain and legumes composed 52% of the total cultivated lands. On the plains 77% of the total cultivated lands consisted of orchards of which 32% were currant vineyards, fig and olive groves 46%. 16% of the total cultivated lands were used in large-scale cultivation out of which grain was 73%, legumes 12%, and vegetables 14%. Vegetables comprised 7% of the total cultivation; Aivaliotakis, *O kampos tis Messinias*, pp. 128-9

daughter to the lender.[4] The family budget was supplemented by contributions from the sons' wages. Bread was the basic diet, and amounted to more than 60% of total food consumption.

Houses in mountainous villages usually had one room with an earthen floor, and beneath this a stable where animal was kept. On the plains houses were usually two-rooms. Furniture was meager and consisted of a few chairs, a table and a bed. The inhabitants had two residences between which they moved in summer and winter.

Gargalianoi was a small town situated in the plains of Trifilia province. It was in the zone of currant production and had developed some industry. After the crisis in currant cultivation in 1893 a large proportion of its population migrated to the United States. The population reached its peak in 1940 with 8,926 inhabitants. Galini's father was a mason, but later in his life he was disabled and he could no longer work. His first wife died and remarried to Galini's mother. Here we again witness an unfavourable marriage for dispossessed women like Galini's mother. He had three children from his first marriage and four by the second. When he got married to Galini's mother his sons were already adults. His first wife's house was rented and one room was kept for one of Galini's brothers. As her father could not work anymore as a mason he opened a kind of tavern on the outskirts of the town. The family moved to this house, which was a homestead, namely a house that was used during the season of agricultural work. This house had three rooms. One was used for receiving customers; the second was used as a kitchen and the parents and the four children inhabited the third. Galini's father had a vineyard for wine production and a vegetable garden in which her mother planted vegetables for family consumption. Her mother did seasonal agricultural labour and moved to different villages around Gargalianoi while she worked as a washerwoman in low agricultural season. During the high agricultural season the children were looked after by the eldest sister.

Sending a daughter into service as a foster child was for rural families with very little or no land a strategy to create bonds of fictive kinship with people of higher social status. For employers who entered into this arrangement, the contract of life-service and the loyalties it was supposed to establish were favourable as those secured lifetime service and care in old age. However, for those subjected as *psychokores*,[5] the reality of service and the vulgar exploitation of children denied the possibility of any benefit.

---

[4] Ibid., pp. 274-8.

[5] *Psychopaidia* means children brought up "for pity", and this institution of informal adoption was an arrangement according to which the child was taken care of by a family and he/she was expected to contribute to the household and offer unpaid labour to repay the "kindness". The institution of *psychokores* [daughters brought up for pity] was a means to secure unpaid labour and care in old age as well as a mechanism for communities and families to deal with orphan children or children of destitute families.

For all the interviewees the decision and timing of entering service was a parental decision. Parents entered into contracts with employers on behalf of their daughters. The arrangement was that girls should work until marriage or for a certain number of years in order to earn a lump sum as payment for their services. Galini entered her first post when she was ten years old working for the family of a wealthy wheat merchant who had been in the United States and returned to Gargalianoi with his wife and one of their children. The contract between Galini's parents and her employers involved a promise of adoption.

> When they [her parents] realized that they could not make ends meet, somebody came and told my mother that a compatriot from America had come with his wife and one of his daughters. He said that Mr X wants to adopt me. My mother agreed and she was compelled to give me.
> -Had your mother told you that you were going to stay with this family?
> They discussed it, she didn't talk to me, but they discussed.
> -What did she tell you?
> Who, my mother? Nothing, I was listening to the discussion. I knew, they arranged the date that I would go.
> -How did you feel listening to this?
> I didn't care too much, but do you know why I am laughing? I remember that I was in the car as we were going to the estate, and I was laughing and narrated various things, and I tried to look clever, to pass for clever, to show a kindness in my way.

Entering domestic service entailed separation from the family and constituted a liminal experience for those who were subjected to it, especially as children. In the memory of the moment of separation we witness again the lack of any reaction and passive acceptance on the part of daughters concerning their parents' decision. In order to understand this absence of emotional response we need to explore the role of daughters in the family economy and their understanding of their position.

A family constituted an economic unit whose survival depended on the contribution of all its members. Nonetheless, not all members had equal access to the decision making-process. Age and gender were important parameters in the distribution of power as well as resources. Children were aware of their subordinate position in the family as well as of their economic role, that is, that they were part of an economy in which bodies and resources were managed by parents. Parental authority in poor households, whether rural or urban, rested on the capacity of parents to manage not only resources but also to handle the labour and bodies of children in economic exchanges. Children entered and exited the labour market according to their parents' decision, and parents had absolute authority over the choice of employment and over their children's earnings. The management of resources lay on parents and children's

earnings were used to cover the needs of the family. Children did not perceive themselves as individuals but as members of the economic unit of the family.

Recognition of the workings of the family economy and one's own tied relationship to these is illustrated by Galini's understanding of the constraints of the family budget as well as by her identification with familial goals. Gendered inequality in the family which constructed daughters as undesirable and inferior beings led to a perception of herself as a burden. Identification with the family and its needs involved the availability and disposition of the self in their service, which was performed and displayed when Galini met her employers. Galini connects her parents' decision to give her for "adoption" with her own attitude towards the employers. She feels obliged to behave in a way that will not embarrass her parents by showing her cleverness and kindness. As we know from other forms of adoption, such as those arranged by the Patriotic Institution, children were subjected to a trial period. Galini knew that she was on a trial period: "He [the employer] wanted to keep me. They loved me very much, of course, but he did not want to adopt me from the start". Galini does not want to disappoint either her parents or her employers. Accepting her position as an object of transaction, her whole self is offered to release her parents of the burden of keeping her in an exchange that consisted of providing service for employers.

This understanding of one's own self as subjected to the needs or obligations of the family could not allow any space for perceiving the self as autonomous possessing of her own self and body. Rather than simply being obedient to parental authority, children understood that their selves and bodies did not belong to themselves but to parents and that they could be disposed of and exchanged in economic transactions.

Pam Taylor has argued that the family constitutes the best preparation for paid domestic service not so much in terms of skills acquired through caring and service work, but in terms of instilling certain forms of attitude, such as obedience, sacrifice and discipline. Discipline and obedience constituted the basic principles for the smooth functioning of the family while labour for the family, caring for younger siblings and for the father were daughters' duties when the mother was away. One of Galini's recurring statements during the interview was: "I was always moral and submissive". The carving of the self in the service of others was the cornerstone of the training of daughters in the family, and a most appropriate preparation for domestic service. The following excerpts are illustrations of the self in the service of others at play:

> While I was in the village I was the only one who was working so much as a small child. When my mother needed something, I was rushing to help her.

> [...] She put me to sleep but I had my mind to cover her feet. She was up in the night to get water with the tin on her back. She was ill, she had diabetes and I felt very sorry for her. I put on my shoes and followed her. She scolded me when I did that but then she was moaning when she tried to lift the tin and I helped her. I loved her very much. [...] When I was little I used to tell her that when I grow up I will marry a doctor to cure you. [Stavroula]

> After two days he waited for his children to come from America and they cooked and slaughtered the chicken. They were wealthy people, yes, and they said, o gosh, the food is not enough; we have to make something more. And I interrupted and said, I don't mind if I don't eat. This stayed with them until they died. Because I said, "I don't mind not to eat", as if my portion would be enough for the rest. [laugh] [Galini]

The affectionate as well as economic bonds that tied "social inferiors" to employers constituted a form of relationship appropriate to the economic system of face-to-face interaction, which Bourdieu defined as symbolic violence.[6] The contract between Galini's parents and her employers involved the promise of adoption. But this informal adoption secured only by word [*logo*] was a precarious situation. During the war Galini was sent back to her parents. Her employers' financial interests were the pivots according to which decisions about her were taken.

> And when we arrived and stayed in the house and her parents were still alive - it was a beautiful two-floor house, ground floor and first floor, and there were five rooms upstairs. The people got scared, and they said, if something happens to us with the bombardment, we shouldn't have the alien child with us; although they had promised to adopt me with *logo*. Never mind. They loved me and I loved them more than my parents, so to speak. But they didn't want to have the responsibility. And we had the dressmaker in the house for three days so that I wouldn't leave without anything. And I did leave, but when her husband heard that, who was still in Komotini, he was very angry and when he was dying he wanted to see me, because he felt guilty [*to'xe kaimo*] that they let me go, he kept on saying, would she be better with her mother? Would I have more food? I would be better off with them. And after they threw me out, he felt guilty until he died.

The complexity of the employer-servant relationship and its emotional dynamics are revealed when children are caught in a situation where boundaries have been blurred and re-established violently. The narrative is again structured in opposition, a typical trope for interviewees used to elaborating injustices, class-based difference and their subordinate position in a relationship. Galini had developed a loyalty to the family through the knowledge that she

---

[6] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, p. 190.

would be adopted. Her parents and employers had presented domestic service to her with the language of a relationship between family members and an investment for the future grounded in familial bonds. Yet, when the war broke Galini was defined by her employers as an "alien" child, even though she had been taught to feel like the family's child. Galini's attachment to her employers is illustrated by her emotional investment in the relationship. Her sense of injustice about this treatment is indirectly expressed through the anger of the son-in-law of her employers in order Galini' s understanding of her unfair treatment to gain legitimacy. The symbolic power exercised by employers in a rural society in which face-to-face relationships predominated denied even the articulation of injustice by social inferiors.

The institution of fostering seems to have been the most widespread practice by which rural communities dealt with orphan girls. Panajiota was born in 1912 in the village Steno in mountainous Corinthia. The population of this area, Feneos, were mainly small holders and cattle breeders. The area was also characterized by a high rate of migration to the United States. As in the case of Messinia, 70% of the population in 1941 aged 40 years and above had migrated to the States. Besides, a large proportion moved for a season each year to the plains of the Peloponnese to work as agricultural workers in currant vineyards.

Feneos was located behind the calcareous mountain wall of Zireia. The population of the village of Steno was 330 people according to the 1928 census: 157 males and 173 females. In 1936, according to the estimates of Aivaliotakis, the population was 372 people. There were 63 families with an average of 6 members each. In 1935 there were 20 people from the village in the United States and 20 people who migrated seasonally.

After 1912, when migration to the States decreased, a large proportion of the population of Steno migrated to Athens permanently. They settled mainly in the area of Kipseli. Those who migrated seasonally fell into three categories: first, cattle-breeders who moved during the winter to the coast and warmer areas and rented pastures with their families. Second, a few families had two residences, one in the mountain for the summer and one on plains, where they moved in the winter in order to cultivate their farms. Third, those who worked as agricultural labourers in the currant vineyards.

Houses usually had two rooms, and underneath those a stable and storeroom. The floor was earthen and there were no windows. As in the majority of peasant houses, the furniture consisted of a bed with a wooden tripod, a table, and a few chairs. Outside the house there was the oven and hencoop. An external wooden or stone stair led to the terrace, which was used for drying peas and maize as well as for drying clothes in the winter and sleeping on in

summer.[7] Bread and legumes were the staple diet of the population. Bread was made by wheat mixed with 30-50% with corn. As there was no self-sufficiency in wheat or corn production, supplies were supplemented by merchants. The illiteracy rate for women was 60% and for men 10-15%.

Nomadic flocks of goats and sheep were transported to the plains in the winter, while domesticated animals were kept in the basement of the house or in a fold by the few who had big flocks.[8] 35% of land remained uncultivated. Lack of roads restricted the possibilities for growing market crops such as potatoes. The dry plots were 4-5 stremmata and the biggest reached 35 stremmata (a stremma is equivalent to a quarter of an acre). The watered fields were 1-2 stremmata but there were also fields even smaller. The largest watered fields in Feneos were 8 stremata. Vineyards were usually 1-2 stremmata. Grain cultivation comprised 62% of the total crop. The lentil crop of the village of Steno was sold for a high price and lentils were sown after the wheat harvest in October, and also in Spring. Peas and maize comprised 18.6% of the total crop. The domestic production of blankets, vests, socks, and coats supplied the needs of the local population. Women participated in all kinds of agricultural work (plowing, digging, reaping etc.).

All the exploitations in the villages of Feneos were negative. A bad crop, a family member's sickness, or a wedding drove a family further down in poverty because the average annual income was barely adequate for the subsistence of the family. For that reason all the families were in debt without being able to improve their situation. As in the majority of Greece, before the establishment of the Agricultural Bank, of which the main purpose was the provision of credit, in Steno credit was provided by the grocer, who did not charge interest but gave credit in kind, and not cash, and charged these products at an inflated rate, while the creditor had to immediately handover his crop or production from cattle raising at a very low rate.

Panajiota's mother died in childbirth when she was six years old, and she was given to a family of cheese merchants consisting of a sister and four brothers. The mistress was the godmother of one of Panajiota's cousins. Thus the family of Panajiota's father was tied to this family by bonds of fictive kinship. This is how Panajiota reconstructs how she entered service:

-Do you remember when you first went there?

---

[7] N.E. Aivaliotakis, *Ai oreinai lekanai Feneou-Stimfalias*, Athens, 1941, pp. 24-5.

[8] The per capita tax for the pastures of the community was small, ranging from 4 drachmas for small animals and 7 for big ones; ibid.

I haven't forgotten anything. They caught me in order to take me down. It was Thanassis, Christos's brother; you haven't met him. They were chasing me around the church to catch me in order to put me on the mule and take me down to Derveni. And I said I am not going. And one of my sisters sat in front of me with a stick and they caught me and put me on the mule and took me to Derveni.

Panajiota stayed with her employers for twenty years. During this period her father did not see her. He visited once after eighteen years but he only talked with her foster mother. Probably he and Panajiota's employer arranged her payment. Panajiota authorized her brother to get her savings from the bank and he took all the money without leaving anything for her. The exploitation of daughters by parents and brothers was a justified practice based on the subordinate position of daughters in the family constructed along gender lines.

A dowry was a prerequisite for a woman's marriage, and this put enormous strains on rural families. Rather than marriage functioning as a security valve for female members of the family or as a form of inheritance, for the rural population with little property the dowry was a basis for gendered prejudice against girls. Although the provision of a dowry was legally an obligation of the father, the interviewees' life-stories show that domestic service was a strategy for the accumulation of a dowry. Fostering was a widespread practice which was considered to be a way to secure a daughter's endowment by her employers in exchange for service. Stavroula was sent into service at the age of 7 from a village in Arta.

-Had your father and mother told you that you were going to this family?
It was funny. My father went to Arta for shopping and I had asked him to bring me a little pot to take it to school for the milk allowance. You know, they gave us milk every morning and I was looking forward to the little pot. And he said, I didn't bring you a pot because you are leaving tomorrow early in the morning. I was crying. And my mother said, where are you going to give the child? My father had a cousin and he said that Kaiti knows the people and that they are nice people. They do not have children and they will take care of her. And the next day I left.
-Why did your father want to give you?
He wanted to because we were a lot of children, for a better future. But we had everything in the village. But my father said that it doesn't matter if I take their name, because they would die one day and I would inherit from them.

Reports from the police headquarters in Athens show that parents entered into contracts with employers on behalf of their daughters. The arrangement was that girls should work until marriage or for a certain number of years in order to earn a lump sum as payment for their services. Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, director of police, wrote several articles arguing for the extension of the prohibition on service labour for children under 14 years old. He cited

several cases that reached the police in the 1930s in which children were found wandering in the streets or injured in hospitals because their employers had expelled them from their houses in order not to pay their wages. Newspapers carried many reports of domestic servants who were not paid by their employers.

> The Society for the Protection of the Child and the Adolescent took up the case of a thirteen year old girl, V. K., from Kos. She had been placed in the house of a rich landowner, B., who had agreed a contract to give her 40,000 drachmas if she stayed twelve years in his service. Her parents, poor and labouring people, asked for information about the household and when they saw that he had houses and shops etc. they thought that their daughter would be lucky and they gave her away. What this child went through in two years! The beatings and abuses were the least she suffered. Her mistress injured her with a knife and left her with quite a scar. Three times she tried to escape but the police handed her over to the same house, where the abuse continued. The last time her hands were bruised from the pinches. The father was informed about the situation and wrote us to send her back to him. We managed to detach her from her employer's hands after a lot of effort and thanks to the warm assistance of the assistant director of the General Investigation Department Mr Paxinos. It is self-evident that her master did not even give her underwear for her two-year labour. When Mr Paxinos advised him to give her her wages, he stated that he wouldn't give her a penny because under the contract he had drawn up, he had an obligation to pay her only if she stayed for a twelve full years in his house. Because she left earlier he was not obliged to give her a penny.[9]

N. E. Aivaliotakis, in his study on the agricultural economy of the basin of Feneos, provided a sample of peasant families after a detailed and careful inquiry into the family budgets of each family. Konstantinos A. Pan. originated from the village Steno, as did one of the interviewees, Panajiota. He was born in 1874 and got married in 1902. He had three children before migrating to the United States in 1911 where he stayed for just one year. He returned to the village without money and he had another seven children. His land holding consisted of 20 stremmata of dry fields, 10 watered, 2 of vineyards and half of vegetables for domestic consumption. The crops he grew were grain (15 stremmata), 5 stremmata of maize, 1 stremma of lentils, and two of vines. His livestock consisted of one mule, 34 sheep, 2 goats, 1 ram, and 10 chickens. Three children were married and lived on their own separate budgets. All the other members of the family (his wife and 2 sons and 1 daughter) worked in the fields, while one of his sons and a daughter worked as agricultural workers doing 50 and 40 days of work per year respectively. All the produce was consumed by the family apart from an income of 500 drachmas from selling lentils. 9, 450 drachmas came from selling sheep,

---

[9] Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation..., pp. 199-200.

cheese (feta) and butter that was used for the needs of the family. The annual balance was only 719 drachmas with which he could not repay his debts (10,000 drachmas). One of his daughters which was hired out on a twelve-year contract to a notary's' office for 40,000 drachmas, that is, for 280 drachmas a month.[10] This money would be received only after the end of the contract. Panajiota received 60,000 drachmas for 20 years, that is, 250 drachmas a month. The police had identified the precariousness of such contracts as there was a practice among employers of dismissing young women and children and accusing them of neglecting their duties, of immoral behaviour or stealing, or of forcing them to leave because breaking such contracts cancelled any obligation of payment. When this did not happen parents appropriated their daughters' earnings and distributed these to siblings, a management which usually favoured males.

Stavroula's father had sent his three daughters into service in Athens while his sons had been given into "apprenticeships". The youngest son, who left home at the age of 11, was mistreated by his employer and was found starving by one of his siblings and removed. Many boys from rural areas worked in conditions of slavery: they slept in storerooms and shops on top of sacks of commodities or on the floor and were given limited food or meager wages that were not adequate for their subsistence. The exploitation of boys, abundantly documented in the sources, has not yet been an object of research. The youngest daughter of the family went into service in the early 1970s.

Lack of control over their own earnings is a predominant feature of the interviewees' experience. For internal migrants the lump sum that had been accumulated after years in service was taken away by the parents and distributed to siblings. Galini's father took her money from the savings bank and sent it to her brother, who was in the army. Galini did not even know the amount of money she had received for her service. Parents also directly received their daughters' wages from their employers. In her third post, Galini's mother migrated from Gargalianoi to Athens and she spent some evenings in the house of Galini' employer. Her mother, who cleaned offices, received Galini's wages directly from her employers and sent them to her sons. Stavroula's father received 500 drachmas every month from employers. In her second post, her employer insisted on putting the money in a bank account in her name. But after fifteen years in service her father forced her to give all her savings to her eldest sister in order to buy a house in Athens.

---

[10] Aivaliotakis, *Ai oreinai lekanai tou Feneou*, pp. 98-104.

II. Fostering as a Welfare Mechanism for Rural Communities

Fostering did not only form part of the resettlement policy of public and private organizations concerning refugee children from Asia Minor or poor children during the Second World War. It constituted also one of the welfare policies of the rural communities by which they dealt with orphan children. In such cases the priest or the teacher decided the destiny of these children, and domestic service was proposed as the solution for orphans. Orphan children stayed in service either for life or for more than twenty years.

Orphanhood emerged as one of the most brutal effects of the war on. Athina was born in Petrota in the north east of Evros, a village with a population of 880 (1971) located near the border with Bulgaria. During the Balkan wars Thrace was a contested territory between Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria. After the Neuilly treaty (19 September 1919), which detached Western Thrace from Bulgaria, a special treaty of 10 August 1920, which was signed the same day a the Sevres Treaty, conceded Western Thrace to Greece. Greek families living around the borders with Bulgaria and Turkey were subjected to reprisals by Thracian Turks and Bulgarian troops who had put forward claims for the autonomy of the territory. Such was the case of Athina, whose mother was killed in an attack by irregular Turkish troops in Petrota that resulted in a massacre of civilians. Children and teachers were killed in the school. Athina 's father had been killed in the Asia Minor war. Athina, before being sent as a servant to a lieutenant, stayed alone in a barn.

> I have suffered a lot... When I was in the village until they came to take me...they took my sister and I was left alone. I will never forget this image, until my eyes will be covered with earth. I didn't have anything. I had some bran, the sort that chickens eat, you know it, don't you? I had the bran in a bag, and I had a piece of wood. I took it, I pressed it with my foot and I made a knife. The neighbours also brought me stock from the vineyards. I said to myself, I will do salt, those days the salt was thick, if you remember. How was I going to break it? And there was a stone in the barn and I kneaded it. I was sitting like the Cinderella, as the fairy tale goes. Embers. I made space, I put it in the embers and I was waiting for it to be baked. And it was so cold... Where could I go? And it was cold... Those days they used to put an iron bar behind the doors, if you know. I took my mattress. And I heard a noise in the midst of the night. Somebody had knocked my door. Ssh, I heard no voice, nothing. He knocked three times. I slept. Each morning a neighbour came. They brought me frumenty, some food, but before I opened to them they used to tell me their name: "It's me, Kira Vasilo", she said. I told her, "Please, tell me your name." She asked me: "What happened my child?" "Last night, Aunt Vasilo, somebody knocked at the door, but I didn't open." And she said: "Take a bag, and go to the priest and tell him, "Each of us will took her for a week until they come and get her." She was talking about me, until they take me as a little servant.
>
> -Who would take you, the priest?

No, there were soldiers; there were still lieutenants. I remember it was September when they took me. A Lieutenant sent a sergeant and I remember that he put me on a horse. The entire village loved me. The entire village had come down to where the train arrives. The train comes from Poli [Istanbul] via Didimoteicho. It was night and I was cold in the train and the sergeant took his greatcoat off and put it on me. When we arrived I couldn't wash the plates or sweep the floor. I was little.
-And after that?
They sent me away. I was bedwetting, I wasn't [to be a servant]. I didn't stay.

Athina was hiding with shepherds in a cave for a week before the Greek army arrived. They found more than fifty people killed in a ditch. Athina's sister, who was older, was sent to work as a servant. Athina was too small and when she was sent to a lieutenant she was not able to work. Finally, a woman in the village took her in as a foster child. Later she sent Athina to her sister-in law to help her because she was pregnant. From there she went to the sister of this woman and she started to work in a tobacco factory. Because she was very young she started by sweeping the floor, a typical job for children in factories. Athina handed in her wages to her "step mother". Once she kept for herself a few drachmas to buy face powder, which she hid in the storeroom. Her stepmother went to the factory to ask the foreman how much money they gave her. After this incident she went to the niece of her stepmother to stay. In the factory Athina met a tobacco merchant with whom she was engaged, but a train killed him. From the factory she went to work as a servant for a lieutenant who had been transferred to Orestiada and after a year they went to Athens. In this house she worked as a servant for the rest of her life.

Another example shows that in rural communities orphan children were taken care of by a succession of neighbours until somebody took them as "*psychokores*", that is as children who would offer their services for life and would care for their elderly foster parents. In many cases foster parents, as we shall see, restricted these children's contact with the outside world and impeded their marriage in order not to lose their services in old age.

Thomais, born in 1915, was also an orphan child whom the neighbours looked after until an aunt adopted her. She was the only servant for a 640 acres farm. Thomais did not receive any money from her aunt, who had promised that in her will to bequeath her property some property. After 38 years in her service she left her aunt's house and got married as it was clear that she would not fulfil her promise. Thomais sued her aunt and won one building plot in a working-class district of Athens and 50,000 cash.

III. Changing Posts

For the rural population from continental Greece the employment of young women meant in most cases migration to Athens or to a city which was not in any case close to their home due to primitive transportation and to the lack of roads. Girls who were not occupied in agriculture on the family property were sent into domestic service. This choice was influenced by economic calculations as well as by cultural perceptions of labour. As the parental family remained in the village, work that would require a separate residence for the female worker was economically disadvantageous and morally unacceptable. Yet, even in cases that the whole family or siblings settled in Athens permanently, women continued to work in domestic service or shifted to day cleaning and child minding.

Decisions about a daughter's migration and employment were parental decisions and illustrate women's lack of autonomy. After Galini's foster parents broke their promise that they would adopt her and sent back to her parents during the Second World War, the family decided to send her to Athens to her aunt's house. Within the restrictive possibilities of employment for a rural girl without education the choices were between factory work or domestic service. Even so, the decision was not hers. Her brother wanted her to work in a factory but the cousin who acted, as Galini says, as a guardian, wanted to send her into service. As Galini explains:

> When I was in Athens in my cousin's house she wanted to put me in a house, to eat and drink in order not to have any responsibility; and in order to have me under control. My brother insisted to put me in a factory. But the reason, it makes me laugh now, she said no to the factory was that "men [*gambrakides*] will chase her and after one, two, ten times she will finally fall".
> -What did you prefer?
> I did not quite understand what they said. Finally, she became something like my guardian and I went to a house [domestic service].

The perceived advantages of domestic service as an employment option for rural migrants related not only to food and boarding but very much to the control of sexuality. Obviously, it was not that Galini did not understand, as she had already worked in two houses as a servant. She had stayed for three years at the first one in her hometown, while at the second, during the war, she stayed for a very short period because her employers starved her. It was taken for granted that she was not an autonomous individual who had control over herself and her labour. Her aunt, an internal migrant herself, had a network in the city that would provide her with information about jobs. She found Galini a post in service in which she stayed for four years, and later she arranged her marriage with a friend of her son,

although Galini wanted to marry someone else. In order to be close to her fiancée her aunt found her a post close to her house.

The interviewees from continental Greece stayed in live-in domestic service until their marriage and shifted to day work after marriage. The money they had accumulated in service was either directly delivered to their parents or, in cases in which employers put it into a bank account, it was appropriated by their male siblings. Internal migrants who settled in Athens worked as day workers cleaning offices and houses. The networks of providing help and circulating information about jobs were restricted to domestic service. As we have already seen, cultural perceptions of labour among the rural population defined the orientation of women towards employment. Domestic service was preferable to factory work, which had a disreputable character for internal migrants. Besides, the interviewees who were internal migrants did not have access to factory work because they lacked networks in this sector of the labour market. Day work can be seen as an extension of the skills they had acquired in domestic service.

Chapter Five

The Dynamics of the Mistress-Servant Relationship

This chapter is an attempt to investigate the process by which a serving subjectivity was produced in women. The making of the self in the service of others is about a specific subordinate subject position produced in the relationship between mistress and maid. Yet, every form of class relationship cannot be exhausted in a face-to-face interaction but rests on a whole network of beliefs, values, practices that extends beyond the confines of this interaction and informs it. I will, thus, try to explore the underlying structural features of this relationship.

The lineaments of the formation of subordinate subjectivities are explored through the narratives of women who worked as servants. In this exploration all the interviews are going to be treated together because the production of subordinate subjectivities is irrelevant to the geographical origin and family background and arises as a common experience for all the interviewees. The memories are not used as vehicles that convey the experience of oppression but as "guides to social identity".[1] Their meaning is drawn from the effects of the experience of service on the subject. As identity is formed through the relationship with one's own past, memories are selected for their contribution to constructing relationships and personal identity. Thus, memory will be treated here as a source of subjectivity, that is, as an important source of conception of ones' own self.

Events that have changed the course of the existence of an individual are transformed through memory into "event-signs", and constitute the knowledge of one's own existence. It is the selection of these events that manifest a truth when memory re-inscribes the past in the present.

The making of the self in the service of others takes place in the realm of the house and is produced though the interpersonal relationship between mistress and maid. The employer-employee relationship was structured as a relationship between females because domestic work and all the responsibilities and functions related to the household were gendered. When the interviewees were asked about masters they said that they had nothing to do with them, and treated them in the interview as if they were invisible. This invisibility reflects the position of men in the household, divested of any responsibility related to the management of the household and domestic staff. Thus, class antagonism and conflict in the employer-employee relationship was locked in an inter-gendered relationship. There are several examples in the

[1] James Fentress and ChrisWickam, *Social Memory*, Blackwell, Oxford 1992, p. 88

interviews that can illustrate that men's distance from responsibility entailed that they also enjoyed also immunity from conflict.

> She was barbarous. He was more humane. [Aggelina]
>
> One day I didn't clean the bathroom. I forgot. And I got in trouble with her. And Mr Giannakis told her, don't scold the child, it doesn't matter about the bathroom, leave her. [Evaggelia]
>
> He was a good man, he wasn't all day in the house. It was her that was grumpy. [Anastasia]
>
> My aunt sent me to this house because she knew the traffic-policeman [the master]. He was a good man, truly a very good man. But she was a bitch. A bitch. [Vania]

One of the most important characteristics that distinguish domestic service from other types of employment is its total character in the sense that the totality of time, the body as well as the labour power of the individual who enters into this particular labour relationship are at the disposal of the employer in an absolute manner. All the activities of the individual subjected in domestic service, duties and chores but also sleep, food, and movement as well as communication beyond the confines of the employers' household are controlled and organised by the employers. The barriers that define a clear separation between leisure, work and sleep are dissolved. This total character of domestic service, defined by the possession of servant's time, movement, labour power and contact with the outside world by a single authority, that of the employer, resembles with what Erving Goffman defines as a total institution.

Erving Goffman in his book *Asylums* defines total institutions as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life".[2]

As Goffman argued, one of the basic functions of total institutions is to create a new person by treating the body as memory. Aiming at the violent elimination of all the traits that composed the identity of an individual and at their substitution with new ones, they place an enormous effort on apparently insignificant details such as dress, bearing, physical and verbal manners. This process of "disculturation" is achieved through technologies that target both body and soul. As Pierre Bourdieu has pointed out, in these technologies a whole cosmology is instilled, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy.[3]

---

[2] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, New York, Anchor, 1961, p. xiii.

[3] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambrigde, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 194.

This chapter will consider the total character of domestic service articulated in the technologies that were employed by employers in order to produce a docile body in their service. These technologies will be approached from the point of view of those who were subjected to them through their effects on subjectivity. These technologies consist of the "welcome", corporal mechanisms of subordination, such as dress, gestures, and postures, divisions of space, testing of honesty, restrictions on food, restrictions on contact, defacement, and physical violence.

The technology of "welcome" aimed at establishing the rules of communication between employer and employee. At the same time, the first encounter with employers was a liminal experience, which allowed the grasping of the transformations of identity and the rupture that the meeting with a different culture produced in the self.

> When I first entered the house, it was the first time I went of course, they opened the door, we entered, and her water pipes had broken. The tubs broke and there was water everywhere, inside the house, a flood, and I didn't know any of these things in the village. I was standing there looking like an idiot. And she started shouting at me. "Quickly, move on, sop up the water, why do you stand like an idiot, don't you see?" This happened the moment I entered, I would never forget that. How could I know, "take the mop, take the bucket," I didn't know any of these things. And I was sick because I always feel dizzy in the car and I vomited, and she started shouting at me. I finally picked up the bucket to sop up the water. This stayed with me, because I didn't burst into tears, but it was very bad for me. [Stavroula]

Memory reconstructs the first encounter with employers as a traumatic displacement that arises out of the self occupying an alien social space (note here the frequent use of the phrase "I didn't know"). Kracauer has talked about situations of self-effacement, or homelessness, like exile, and the states of mind in which the self is a stranger who does no longer belongs to a place. In these situations the mind becomes a *palimpsest*, in the sense that the self the person was continues to exist beneath the person he is about to become, his identity is bound to be in a state of flux.[4] Stavroula came to Athens from a village of Northwestern Greece at the age of seven. Her employers picked her up with their car and brought her to Athens. On finding herself in an alien place, in a social space to which she did not belong, her identity was in a state of flux, of becoming. She was not only cut off abruptly from a familiar social space, but also from the material culture connected with this space. Her look was vacant because what she saw was not pregnant with memories. The objects around her are unrecognizable. Her mode of

[4] Siegfried Kracauer, *History: The Last Things before the Last*, Oxford Un. Pr., New York, 1969, p.

existence is that of the stranger to her self while, the expression of emotions was curtailed as tears presuppose reciprocity.

The self in a state of flux is not empty from memories as the knowledge of the past determines understanding of the experience of the present situation.[5] The lack of knowledge of a particular social space, and in consequence of the language that conceptualises these images, impeded the communication between the newly arrived servant and the employer. Here the process of stepping out of one's culture is not an act of freedom as Kracauer put it. There is no possibility to make the "other" culture her own. Instead a whole range of technologies extending from the body to the mind were used by the employers to establish boundaries and keep the servant "in her place". These technologies, performed immediately at the moment of entering the house, accentuated the sense of displacement and alieness, and served as an initiation into the new culture. It was at through this encounter that Stavroula came to consciousness of herself not as a family member but as a worker.

The control of communication rests with the employers and a specific tone of voice is employed to restrict contact. Shouting was a common strategy of intimidation on the part of the employers, and it set the rules of communication. The immediate allocation of tasks to the newly arrived servant is the initiation ritual for the new identity, that of the worker for the family. Moreover, these strategies serve as an "obedience test".

Let us move to another interviewee who entered domestic service at the age of ten. During the Second World War she was sent into service by the Patriotic Institution for the Protection of Children. The "welcome" entailed a series of humiliations, degradations and abasements.

> When they brought me to her [employer], they started to tell me "sweep there, wash there", and I was small and I bent, how could I know to kneel, how could I know the chores. Finally, when they put me to wash the dishes, from which they had eaten, they did not give me any food because there wasn't any left, and I neither spoke, nor could I speak, because I saw them I don't know how... Sometimes they gave me some juice from the food, to eat, to put on bread... I remember, and this has remained with me until now, and I tell this to my daughters and I'm still crying. I was licking their dishes, they ate and I was licking their dishes. They didn't take me to feed me, they took me as a skivvy. And I was a child that didn't know. To leave from a family in which we ate off plates of tin in order not to break them because we were a lot of children and to find yourself in a house in which they ate off plates of china, these seemed to me very alien things. In my fantasy. [Eleftheria]

[5] David Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 2.

The articulation of the first encounter with employers indicates that entering service was a rite-of-passage, a move to a new social space and identity. The structuring of the narrative in oppositional terms is employed to illustrate difference, to set self-identity in opposition to the employer's identity. The withdrawal from the familiar world and the social background in which it was embedded was a cultural shock, as girls could not even recognise the objects and the spaces of the new world. The correspondance between social space and the symbolic properties attached to this space produce certain dispositions which constitute the class habitus. The assymetrical relationship to material things in the employer's house and the employee's exlusion from and thus illegitimate relationship to property constituted the hierarchy and positioned those who lacked both the legitimate possession of things but also the symbolic properties and dispositions attached to these things as subordinate. The house was the space where class distinction was made concrete, and where one's own identity was recognized as different and inferior to that of the employers.

I. Corporal Mechanisms of Subordination

The body has become an object of inquiry as a site of knowledge and of conditioning mainly through normative discourses. Scholars have not been so much concerned with the practices through which social knowledge is conveyed, and with the ways in which the body enacts social subordination. Neither have they investigated the effects of control on real bodies and its emotional dynamics. As David Connerton argued, "In all cultures much of the choreography of authority is expressed through the body".[6] He also considered that it is possible to discern social inequalities through the ways people use their bodies in relation to the bodies of others. This section will explore the incorporating practices through which bodies were constituted as inferior. Since social hierarchies are not just expressed through the body but are constituted and established in the body, we shall explore the training of bodies in the service of others. Dress, gestures, postures, and facial expression were means for constructing hierarchical relationships, and they will be examined here from the standpoint of the wearer.

The apron constituted the symbol that displayed the employers' status. The circumstances in which employees put on an apron varied according to the social status of their employers. In upper-class households, in which everyday life, and especially eating, had a ritual character, servants wore aprons inside the house; aprons were different colours and made

[6] Ibid., p. 74.

different kinds of material according to the tasks servants performed. Upper-class households usually had two to three servants: a cook, a chambermaid and a person who attended at the table, and sometimes also a chauffeur. Dress varied according to the tasks each one performed and according to the formality of situations. When the chores and the cooking were performed lighter colours and cheaper materials were used for the uniform. During serving the person who attended at the employer's table wore a black dress and white apron. For formal dinners with guests, the staff had black dress, white apron, cuffs and bonnet.

> In the morning we put on an apron with straps while we did the chores. As soon as we finished you had to shower, this was obligatory in order not to smell when you serve them, and we put on the black dress, white apron and white cuffs. [Aggelina]

In lower-class households, employers put greater importance on the use of aprons outside the house. Dinners did not have the formality of upper-class households, while everyday life was devoid of a ceremonial character. These differences also indicate the different functions of the apron. Wearing an apron signalled the possession of an individual in the service of others. For lower middle-class women, social recognition was not a given, but had to be proved. The possession of servants was a privilege that the middle-class enjoyed and thus a means through which social recognition was pursued. For that reason, in lower-class households with only one servant, the apron was part of the employer's strive to participate in dominant values and it was used only outside the house in order to display the privileged position of women. Going shopping or accompanying the mistress or the couple on Sunday, a servant wearing an apron signified the respectability of her employers. The servant's body mirrored the wellbeing of the household, its neatness, order and cleanliness. It was in this sense a body, and by extension a person, without any identity apart from that of servant, a projection of middle-class respectability.

> This lady, because I was a good child, I was of good stuff [*kalis pastas*], put me taffeta ribbons, I had very long hair. The only bad thing with this woman is that she put me an apron. She took me with her; we went to the cinema. Or they wanted to go to a confectionery with the children and she took me with her. But she wanted me to wear an apron always. [...] She sent me for bread, for vegetables, she said to me you will buy this and that. I went out always wearing an apron. It was out of the question that I should go out without wearing an apron. And every time I went out, I had to wear a new apron, a clean one.
> -Why did she do that?
> I don't know. I too wonder about that. Now my daughter says that she wanted to show that she had a servant. I don't think that she was so petty as to want to show that she had a servant. I don't know. It was a

> kind of principle, I don't know, it was a repressed desire [*to apothimeno*]. Let me take a handkerchief. [Eleftheria]

Yet the apron was not solely the symbol or expression of social superiority, but its infliction constituted social hierarchies. Through the apron, employers constructed a different person. Stripping their employees' body of all those characteristics that constitute a person's identity, such as clothes, was a means to achieve defacement. This technology of defacement was part of the process of disculturation, that is, of creating a new individual, of reconstructing an individual in the service of others. Personal possessions are important elements out of which an individual builds a self, as we have seen in Eleftheria's account, which stresses ribbons and long hair as items of self-identity and reward. Though the infliction of the apron the control of the individual over their own body and self was curtailed and substituted with the domination of employers over the bodies of employees. This domination extended, as we have seen above, to the control of excretion. Showers were obligatory before serving at table in order to eliminate smell.

The apron was a stigma symbol for those who wore it, not only because it was a manifestation of the social status of the bearer and of the confinement that domestic service entailed, but also because it solidified the image of a person in the service of others and displayed the symbolic possession of the body beyond the employer's house. The emotions that the infliction of the apron produced were devastating for self-esteem and hurt these children who were in an ambivalent position in a family. The messages the apron sent to the working class population were deciphered differently than by the middle classes. In some cases the apron was also an arena of conflict between couples. Eleftheria's mistress, who had married the errand boy [*psychogios*] of her father, argued with her husband about Eleftheria wearing the apron outside the house.

> Her husband said, "please, tell Eleftheria to take off the apron". And they had an argument on this issue. The husband wanted me to take off the apron but she didn't want. As I told you I obeyed. I obeyed her more than Kostas, her husband.

Coming from a lower-class background the husband not only was aware of the stigma that a uniform attaches to a person but he intervened to prevent Eleftheria's exposure to a stigmatic identity.[7] It is possible that Eleftheria's master as a servant in the merchant enterprise of his

[7] For the embarrassment that the use of uniform provoked and the resistance to it in other working environments, see Liakos, *Ergasia kai politiki...*, p. 389.

wife's father had been wearing an apron. In this implied identification between the mistress' husband and Eleftheria the power and control lay with the mistress.

The imposition of the apron was a point of conflict between employer and employee. Those who climbed to the top of a servant's career and became cooks resisted wearing an apron outside the house.

> -Did you wear an apron when you went out?
> No way I would go out with the children wearing an apron. [Anastasia]

> She didn't force me to wear an apron. Other [employers] did. There was no way I could wear an apron outside. I wore it in the house, but as soon I got out of the house, I put the apron aside. I put it away. [Eirini]

Postures, gestures, and speech also played an important role in the construction and reproduction of difference. Standing erect while talking to employers, standing while the employers were dressed, never addressing to employers unless they were encouraged by them to do so, bowing and curtseying when visitors were in the household were some of the essential rules of behaviour in the household. Eleftheria was astonished with the changes her sister's body had undergone since she had been employed as a servant in an upper-class household. She remembers the stiffness of her body when Aggelina was talking to them and the changes in her vocabulary. Dressing up was also a ritual procedure for middle-class women.

> When she was getting dressed, I had to stand like a soldier before her, and to give her this and that. Like a soldier. All those hours I had to stand like a soldier. She put on the make up, she took off the make up, and in order to go out she had to put this and that. Three times a week she played cards. [Artemis]

> I was kind to them. I bent for them. Those days shoes had buttons, so you had to button their shoes. [Eva]

These narratives help us to understand the incorporation of bodily practices and the transformations that bodies underwent in service. Women who went into service as children stress persistently in their accounts the way they had to adapt their bodies to the demands of domestic work. These changes are inscribed in their memories but also imprinted on their bodies as their continuing obsession with cleanliness and order show.

Their accounts of their training illustrate that learning and doing the chores required a tremendous amount of effort, but also required the removal of previously known attitudes. Entering a middle-class house was a completely new experience for all the girls, whether they belonged to the rural or urban population. Kneeling and bending to sweep floors, standing on

stools to wash the dishes, laying beds, but also the names of rooms, tools and utensils, as well as the use of electricity, were things completely new for them. The control over one's own body and the self-discipline that domestic labour required in order to maintain the employers' property were fundamental targets of training in service. It is even possible construct a biography of objects as they move between employers' and servants' hands, as a way to investigate not only their symbolic function as items of distinction that correspond to a particular class but also their life trajectories in the household and the important role of servants in prolonging their life and preserving them. Moreover, members of the households' positioning in relation to goods illuminates the antagonisms that were embedded in their unequal relationship to things, and the effects of possession and dispossession upon self-perception, as well as the forms of alienation that the use and maintainance, but not ownership, of things involves.

Rituals of deference such as curtseying, bending and standing erect before employers and guests constituted a memory of the body, and were reproduced after service, and moreover transferred to future generations. Let us see how these ritual gestures of respect and obedience, which were taught in a work environment, are used by people outside this environment, in situations in which they felt inferior.

Eleftheria refers to her relationship with her husband and his kin.

> He imposed many things on me. And I accepted it either because I had been taught to obey or because I felt inferior toward Nikos because of poverty and because I married without a dowry. [...] My mother threw me in with Nikos' kin and I didn't know how to guard myself. Do you understand? Because it was a family different from mine. But one thing saved me. [...] I had learned from this [the employer's] family to behave, to talk, and to be silent when it was appropriate. She told me, "you will not talk if they don't ask you. Whatever you see, you will say I didn't see anything". She gave me good things. And these proved useful in my subsequent life. And in the family of Nikos I didn't speak; I only listened to them.

The above testimony illuminates the process through which social inequality takes the form of social principle. Self-censorship constitutes one of the mechanisms of obedience through which a person learns her place in the employer's house, which here is reproduced when faced with the fear of exposure in the eyes of those who possessed cultural and economic capital. The employer's house was a place of reform in which an individual went through a form of conversion consisting of the elimination of presence, desires, and opinions, in short of the suppression of individuality. Invisibility as well as respect towards social superiors was the aim

and achievement of this training. The appropriation of the codes of bodily practices before socially superior individuals was considered valuable and it aroses out of "a feeling of a gap between the socially legitimate body and the body which one has and is".[8] The unease and awkwardness experienced due to the inability to incorporate a socially legitimate body, and the fissure between a body one wishes to have and the body one sees through the condemning eyes of others leads the person to conform and to the perpetuation of the practices of bodily inferiority. "Unable to incarnate an acknowledged model", Eleftheria resorts to adapting to a dominated position, one learned in service, out of the fear of exposure. The recognition of authority is produced though the sense of failure and cultural unworthiness.[9]

Corporal and psychological abuse exersized by employers was a mechanism of control enforced particularly on children, and it threatened the bodily and psychic integrity of those who were subjected to it. Violence was widespread in service, as is documented in police reports and in the interviewees' testimonies. It was a mechanism that aimed at the total elimination of the individuality and autonomy of the other.

Corporal and psychological abuse of children by employers was what made service unbearable. Children who were in a vulnerable psychic state as they had experienced loss of parents and the violence of war found themselves in conditions that not only did not provide any support but aggravated psychological disturbances.

> I will tell you what she did. She had diabetes and she didn't eat sugar. Well, I made the coffee, and dipped some bread in it to eat. We had to fast and she didn't give us milk. [...] I make the coffee, and she tastes it and because it was sweet, she slapped me with her rings. She delivered many women and when they did not have money to pay, they gave her jewellery. She wore them. Her hands were full of jewellery. She tried the coffee and because it was sweet... "I told you to drink it without sugar", but how can I drink it bitter. I can't drink it like that, I was a little girl, 12-13 years old. Even 14 or 15. Is the coffee drinkable like that? She slaps me and I started bleeding. That's how she used to beat me: with the back of her hand straight in the mouth. She beat me and I left and I went to Makriyanni, where the American Relief was. And the building is still there, opposite to the Columns of Zeus Olimpios. [...] There it was the Club of the Working Girl where young women went to eat because it was cheap. I don't know where they worked. Those who were in a house. So, I left twice. She [the employer] came and found me there, she said, "our children are on the streets". I told her "you go, I don't have any children". Then Lykourezou came, there were other ladies as well. She told her, "Madam, don't exersise such

[8] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 91.

[9] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 386.

> pressure on children, you break their nerves, don't you understand that they are just children? You make great demands on children". [...] And I told Lykourezou, "do you see my mouth? She beats me". She said, "let's go". And they [ladies] said, "stay here until she calms down". But I couldn't calm down. I was hitting the table with my fists, I turned the table upsite down. "She is criminal", I shouted, "she beats me, she will kill me, I don't go anywhere". They cajoled me, they said in fifteen days time we'll take you. In fifteen days they came. She had changed her attitude. She behaved like a different person. Let me put my glasses on. With all these tears that they don't know how to burst and damage later the body, all this suffering, when the child is needy, when she suffers... [Evdoksia]
>
> When they sent her the invitation from the Near East, then she dressed me up and she gave me a doll and I had a doll then. Then I held a doll in order to go there. [Evdoksia]

The above testimony is an illustration of the deep antagonism and conflict embedded in the mistress-servant relationship. Evdoksia refuted her positioning as a member of the family ("I do not have any children"), a denial and a form of defiance directed both against her foster mother as well as against the institution that positioned her as a foster child. The hand full of rings that slapped her was not the hand of her mother that symbolized shared property and inheritance rights. It was the hand of an employer who possessed both property and the power to exclude her from the consumption of goods.

For girls who were placed as servants by Near East Relief it was required that their employers disclose imformation about their economic status. They were also required to deposit an amount of money in the orphan's name for an agreed-upon number of years. Additionally, Near East Relief officials were supposed to scrutinise the family and social life of the employers and to watch closely, through home visits, the welfare of children. In the case of Evdoksia, none of the above rules was seriously applied.

Hair cutting was a form of punishment that aimed at humiliating children and young women in service. It was one of the corporal practices in total institutions that marked the passage to a different form of life stripping the person of a visible characteristic as well as a sense of individuality. When performed in domestic service, it reveals the antagonism felt by mistresses who wanted to have total possession of children. Beauty and contact with the outside world theatened their control over girls and set at risk the institution of fostering. Feelings of jealousy were part of their fear of the undermining of their authority. At the same time, evny also involved a desire for the "class other" who was constructed through nineteenth-century patriarchal fantasies as the bearer of female sexuality. These patriarchal fantasies

transfered to the lower classes the sexual desires that were expelled from and had to be repressed by millde-class females. Damage to the body, and especially to the face, inflicted by mistresses are illustrations of her envy of and desire for the maid's sexuality.

> I had this life of beating. She sent me to her cousin to give her a note. And she wasn't there. And she asked, who brought it? Eleni?. No. Who, Konstantina? No. The beautiful one who wears her hair in plaits. Me, the poor one, the pretty one with the plaits. She put me standing. My mistress, why do you cut my hair? And she beat me. And she left my hair in the shape of the fez, she cut it all around the head and left me a crest. And I was an eighteen-year old girl. She wanted me not to walk like this but like that. And I had to wear a bodice in order not to show my breast. But it showed. She made me bodices of canvas. She beat me. [Panajiota]

> I put the clock ten minutes earlier in order to be on time at school. And she realized that. One morning as I was combing my hair, she came, I always had a forelock when I was small, and she took the scissors and cuts my hair to the roots. How could I go to school like that? I told you, there are a few things that I will never be able to forget. She didn't want me to look at myself in the mirror. She sent me to the corner shop. I was eight years old and I went shopping, to buy milk. I told you, there are some things that you can't forget. And it happened that the man in the shop had a client. She came shouting to me, what are you doing, why don't you come home? She saw me there, are you still there, what are you doing? And she pulled my ear, I can't remember what she said. She abused me all the time. And when we went out, she dressed me and she used to say hypocritically, Stavroula, my beloved child. [Stavroula]

Corporal violence was exersized against children and also against young women. Not only the interviewees' testimonies but also the police reports were rife of incidents of mistreatment of children by their employers. The director of the Police Headquarters draws from these reports several cases of children who were found severely beaten and expelled by employers hanging around in the streets of Athens. He adds that there were numerous incidents of children resorting to police stations because they had been beaten by employers against whom there was no persecution.

> A pensioner, an ex civil servant of the State in a town of Old Greece, received, before departing, a poor orphan girl, at most ten years old, in order to serve him with the promise of providing her with a dowry as is usually the case with these problematic protectors in order to avoid paying these poor creatures who serve them. It is unimaginable what this poor girl went through and the number of beatings she was subjected to by the wife of this mister. The most tragic is that as

punishment they put her down a well and locked the cover.[10]

> A. "The accused A... wife of G.S, doctor, age 33, having in her service for nine years Soultana, unknown surname, age around 13, abused her frequently, and specifically on 18-2-32 threw hot water on her and caused burns to her face. The night of 19-2-32 she threw her out of the house with the words "go wherever you want".
> B. Mrs B. was arrested and was committed to the Public Procecutor's office for injuries, because on 4-9-33 she cut the ear of her servant, according to some witnesses with a knife, according to others with her teeth. These two cases incite horror. I restrict myself to these because they were of a purely criminal character. I don't want to expand more and mention the many of cases of poor little girls who came to the police with bodies covered in bruises from pinches or with faces lacerated by nails or heads bruised from beatings. We were used to these things because they were an everyday phenomenon. [11]

Sexual violence was the primary reason for abandoning a post in service. The majority of the interviewees, with very few exceptions, had experienced sexual violence by their employers, or their sons, and relatives. Sexual violence was widely experienced both in fostering and in other forms of service. Both at a very young age as well as after marriage. For children it was the most painful experience and constituted one of the most vulgar attempts to annihilate the self. Stavroula's foster father harassed her at the age of eight and threatened her with a gun and told her that if she said anything to her "mother", he would kill her. After three years she met her parents for the fist time after she had been in service.

> I couldn't tell it to my father, but he was smart and he realized what had happened. [...] I didn't let my mother leave. I was crying and I told her that I had a very bad time and I wanted to leave. But my father understood and asked me why I wanted to leave. And I just told him that he threatened me that he would kill me with the gun. [...] I haven't told this to anybody. How could I tell such a thing? There are some things that are unspeakable. [Stavroula]

The codes of honour in different communities and the norm of chastity are explored later in the thesis. According to these norms women were held responsible for their reputation, which reflected immediately on the family. Violation of the norm of chastity entailed the loss of honour not only of the woman herself but also of her family. Chastity was a universal form of sexual control over women upon which gender inequality was built. The unequal gendered distribution of blame and shame has been internalised by the interviewees who perceived

[10] Pavlos Nirvanas, "The little slaves", *Estia*, Friday 9 July 1926.
[11] Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation of little servants", p. 197.

themselves as bearers of family honour. Sexual harassment was construed as a shameful experience, which women perceived as their own failing and which made them feel that they fell short of what they ought to be. Sexual abuse could not be spoken about because it automatically transferred the blame and shame onto the woman. The interviewees who were harassed by their employers, or their sons, left their post without revealing that they had been attacked. Thus, even when they were themselves victims of sexual harassment by their employers, they reproduced the gender biased ideas that put the blame on women.

> Thanks be to God, I didn't do anything wrong to provoke anyone to lay a finger on me. I was honest and honourable. Because, when the other sees that you are a good person, he does not approach. It's true. If you don't do something to provoke the man, he does not approach. [...]
> I had appendicitis. I was sleeping on the floor and the master brought a bed and the mattress from the basement and put me in the room. It was between the room of the mistress and the good master. Do you understand? And the monk [ironically the brother of her mistress who was very religious] came and I screamed. With my scream, he went back. He did not touch me. If I stayed, I don't know what would happen to me. Only if he beat me, otherwise it wouldn't happen to me. Thanks God. God pitied me. I returned honoured and glorified, I didn't return stained. [Panajiota]

> I was sleeping on the floor. Down, down on the floor. And she had a bed in the room and, I cannot forget it, she brought her father in-law. And she had me down on the floor and her father in-law... I left, I was little but we were not cunning. And the old man as I was lying down... and I left in dawn secretly and I went crying to my aunt and to my father. There were no social workers those times. And the old man came to paw me. And I started shivering. [Vania]

> They say that our village produces whores. They say that in our village they are all whores. They went down to Arta and came back pregnant. They went to houses to work as servants and came back pregnant. My father used to tell me this, when I was grown up, we discussed and he said this. [Stavroula]

> The son wore stiff collars with a button to pass through the tie. And he turned towards me to kiss me. Now I was a young woman. I said, Mr Kostas, please stand straight because I cannot button your shirt. He said, do your job. I didn't give him any right. Any, any. There was a compatriot and the master left her pregnant. Yes, the master. And he gave her 50,000 because they sued him and in order to avoid the court he gave her money. She bought a house in Athens. She married afterwards and the young man knew all the truth. He knew. She was not a girl of the streets. He forced her. My mother in Constantinople, she worked in a house and minded a child. And the master fancied my mother, because she was pretty, and while she was sleeping she felt his

> hand. She told him, go away because I will call the lady. *It depended on the woman.* [...] The next morning the lady asked her, why are you leaving, Niki? She said, I couldn't stay because the baby is crying. She didn't want to betray and say what happened. [Eva]

It was not only employers or foster fathers who attempted to rape their employees. Neighbours also attacked girls who were in service. The interviewees from Folegandros and from a refugee background heard from their mothers that they also had abandoned their posts in service both in Istanbul and Athens because masters had harassed them. Older women who worked as day workers were harassed by their employers also:

> The lady was out to work. And I saw a person in front of me. He said, the lady is out, can I talk to you? I said, we don't have anything to say. If I wanted a boyfriend would I choose him? He wanted to pounce upon me. I took a chair, and I said, keep my wage, and I left. I didn't go back again. If I wanted to do this job, I wouldn't go there to work. [Artemis]

As we have already seen middle-class women expressed a great anxiety about this phenomenon, which they perceived as a threat to family peace. Feminists castigated middle-class men for their sexual exploitation of servant girls and they accused the legislators of the Act On the Presumption of Fatherhood of providing an asylum for employers who had illegitimate children with servants. In fact, articles of the Act provided a scandalous protection to employers, and in consequence to the inheritance rights of the middle-class family. During the 1920s legislation concerning the protection of illegitimate offspring was enacted three times. Although according to the Decree On the Presumption of Fatherhood under the Paggalos dictatorship in May 1926 (influenced by the bill prepared by the legal sector of the National Council of Greek Women and the League for the Rights of Women which was based on the French and Swiss codes) the presumption of fatherhood existed if the mother of an illegitimate child could prove with two witnesses that intercourse with the father took place, in July 1926 with the decree of the Eftaksias government, and again in November 1927 with the new decree On the Status of Illegitimate Offspring, a woman had to prove cohabitation with the father between the 300th to 180th day before giving birth. The presumption of fatherhood was annulled in case there was co-residence but no co-habitation.[12] This meant that asylum was

[12] "The discussion for the law on the protection of illegitimate children", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 60, 15 Jan. 1928, p. 4; Avra Theodoropoulou and Maria Svolou, "Memorandum of the League for Women's Rights on the decree On the Presumption of Fatherhood", *O Agonas tis Ginaikas*, no. 43, 15 April 1927, p. 6; "Memorandum of the National Council of Greek Women and the League for Women's Rights", ibid., no 93, 31 May 1929, p. 3. The first affiliation order by the court of first instance passed in 1937 after a three-year judicial process while the legal expenses were covered by the

granted for the master who had intercourse with his servant. Besides, according to the article 18, an illegitimate child had the right to demand of the father (after acknowledgement of the relationship) an education proportionat to the social status of the mother while retroactivity was set to sixteen months. Legislation under the Paggalos regime had met a huge resistance: "With the decree On the Presumption of Fatherhood foreign customs are imported out of the mania for creating a law. [...] We do not gather any other reason for the introduction of the law than the desire of the State to appear agreeable to a group of women to whom nature did not give the charisma of motherhood [...] Now X., knowing that her offspring will be entitled to alimony, inheritance rights, and a name, will provide herself easily to the appetites of every virile male and the act of creation will be but an organized raid upon property in the form of alimony and inheritance rights".[13] Illegitimacy was also linked to service. In a memorandum released by the League for the Rights of Women, it was stated that the mothers of illegitimate children belonged to the lower classes and in their great majority were servants. It was also argued that these women were driven to prostitution because of the lack of any economic provision and help from the state. If one looks at the occupational distribution of suicides, servants held the first position.[14] It could be that there is a link between rape or illegitimate pregnancies and suicides.

Psychoanalytic theory can provide the tools to analyse sexual relationships between masters and servants. Jane Gallop has read the seduction of the maid as a ritual homogenizing assimilation. Seduction entailed assimilating the maid's alterity, being not just her not belonging to the family but also not belonging to the same economic class.[15] The maid, according to Gallop, is a threshold figure, existing between "within the family" and "outside the family". Seduction is a threshold act, somewhere between incest and exogamy, embracing the outside and attempting to assimilate it. Maria Ramas has also shown how servitute was a metaphor for femininity in patriarchal constructions of sexual difference, and the maid acted out the drama of femininity by being tied to bondage and debasement.[16] The maid was central for constructing an argument that defended patriarchal fantasies of femininity and female sexuality.

National Council of Greek Women; Agni Roussopoulou, "The presumption of fatherhood", ibid., no. 1, January 1938, p. 3.

[13] "Miscellaneous", *Themis*, no. 15, Year 37, pp. 223-4.

[14] "Who, how many and why commit suicide every year in Athens", *Akropolis*, 26 June 1931.

[15] Jane Gallop, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction*, Macmillan, 1982, pp. 146-7.

II. The Division of Space: Forms of Symbolic Violence

The places servants slept and ate illustrate the imprint of social inequality in domestic space. For the majority of the interviewees a room was a luxury that very few enjoyed. Only two out of twenty interviewees had a room of their own, These rooms were tiny and dark and were usually located in the basement or next to the kitchen.[17] They did not have heating even in the 1960s when flats in multi-storey blocks had central heating. Neither did they have wardrobes. Aspasia put her socks in a drawer in the kitchen and was scolded by her employer who asked her to put them under her mattress. In upper-class houses, a room was shared between the domestic staff. Sleeping on the floor, in a corridor, in a *patari*, in the laundry room, in the kitchen and even under the kitchen table did not reflect the lack of space in the middle-class house but a violation of all areas of the self. Moreover, the space accorded to a body, as well as the space claimed for her body in physical space, were fundamental for experiencing one's sense of social value and also for constructing social difference.

> Down, down on the floor. And she had a bed in the bedroom and, I won't forget this, she brought her father-in-law. She had me on the floor. [Vania]

> *Panajiota.* There was a room and we slept on the floor, one hessian down and the other up.

The two-table pattern, as Elvin Hatch had called the separate eating arrangements for workers and family in households, was a symbolic marker of social distance.[18] Employers ate only with people they considered their social equals in their dining room, while servants ate in the kitchen. Ioanna, who nursed an elderly person, considered herself different from the maid of all work.

> They distinguished us in many issues, in many...Flora went out on Sunday with her cousins. In the afternoon. Because she had to stay in the morning in order to cook and wash the dishes after they had their meal. And afterwards we [with her employers] went out. We went to the theatre, to the movies.
> -Did you eat with them?

---

[16] Maria Ramas, "Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria", in Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane, *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism*, London, Virago, 1985, p. 176.

[17] "The existence of the so-called rooms for domestic servants, especially those in blocks of flats, in which they are forced to sleep, is alone enough to attach a stigma in our civilization", Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "Social "Social provision for the protection of the child in our country", *To Paidi*, no 41, Jan.-Feb. 1937, p. 21. "The loft proved extremely hot in the summer and freezing cold in the winter; we assigned the attic to the servant, and he, too, abandoned it after a while"; Penelope Delta, *Anamniseis, 1899* [Memoirs, 1899], ed. by Pavlos Zannas and Alexandros Zannas, Athens, Ermis, 1990, pp. 383-4.

[18] Elvin Hatch, *Respectable Lives: Social Standing in Rural New Zealand*, University of California Press, 1992, pp. 140-143.

No, no. I ate with Flora. We had a nice table in the kitchen. I didn't want to offend Flora. No, it wouldn't be appropriate. I did offer my services too in this house. Together. She was a very good woman.

This perception of the self as different emanates from her position in the household and the underlying hierarchical relationships. Ioanna was not paid but she did a service job. The restriction on contact both with her parents and with the other domestic staff imposed by her employers was a form of control that aimed at safeguarding her long-term service. At the same time, sharing a number of middle-class attitudes such as accompanying employers in the theatre and better clothing put her in an in-between space. The separate eating arrangements, apart from her serving duties, indicate that she was not a social equal of her employers. This ambivalence in identity is illustrated by the explanation about her segregation from employers at meal time. On the one hand, it was done on the ground of not offending Flora, the maid of all work. On the other hand, it was an appropriate to her status arrangement as she too was a servant.

As Elvin Hatch argues, "Systems of social standing, or prestige structures, and the concept of person are rooted in the same body of cultural ideas. The moral notions by which the individual identifies what is significant about others and so orders them into hierarchies of standing also form the conceptual scheme by which the individual defines, measures and shapes his or her own self-identity".[19] Separate eating arrangements for agricultural labourers and land owners marked social difference in rural society. The sense of the self that emerged through this form of social standing was rooted in work and in the position of a particular occupation in the system of hierarchy in a particular community.

-When you went to this house in 1934 did you see your mother?
Yes, she came to the house, because she was a noble person, a very nice soul she had, very good person my mother, she was ashamed to sit at the table with us because her hands were a mess. [she laughs]
-Was she working?
Yes, agricultural labour, how could we live otherwise? And she was ashamed to eat, yes.
-Did you eat with them?
Yes, but when my mother came I ate separately. They had me as their own child.

Her mother's refraining from eating with Galini's employers was an expression of respect to social superiors and of conforming to the moral codes of rural society. The internalization of the social structures that legitimize distinction and their transfer to the next generation are

expressed in Galini's understanding of this specific situation. Galini's mother was not in a labour relationship with the employers of her daughter. Her mother's refraining from eating with those employers is, rather, a manifestation of knowing her place in the world, of having a sense of her own place expressed through excluding herself from what she was already excluded from by the system of hierarchy. Here, it is the body that bespeaks social inferiority bearing the traces of manual work, and becomes the most indisputable materialization of class. As Bourdieu pointed out, "The seemingly natural features of the body [...] reveal the deepest dispositions of the habitus".[20] Exclusion derives from her mother's knowledge that she does not possess a legitimate body that would allow her to eat with her daughter's employers. The marks of labour on her body revealed that she did work that was ranked low in the hierarchy of occupations. This low status of labour transferred its devaluing marks through the body to the self. That the value of the self is rooted in work is also manifested in Galini's effort to disentangle her mother's character, her inner self, from the labour she performs and from the marks of labour on her hands. Galini knows from her mother's shame that a [female] body that bears the scars of manual work can transfer its class marks to the self. If delicate and clean hands are signs of respectability, because they illustrate the freedom from manual work, then hard, dirty and worn hands tell of a lack of respectability. That Galini insists so much on her mother's kindness suggests that there is constantly an imagined or true audience [myself] that might question her mother's worth in relation to the form of labour she performed. Shame produces defensiveness against an external construction of superiority. Galini's laughter was an expression of the embarrassment she felt about her mother's body.

The meaningful practices and perceptions generated by the class habitus, defined as "the subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class and constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception"[21] can be illustrated in Galini's willing self-exclusion from things from which she was already excluded, that is, access to her employers' goods:

> After two days he waited for his children to come from America and they cooked and slaughtered the chicken. They were wealthy people, yes, and they said, o gosh, the food is not enough, we have to make something more. And I interrupted and said, I don't mind if I don't eat.

---

[19] Ibid., p. 180.

[20] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 190. See also, Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, p. 110.

[21] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, p. 86.

This stayed with them until they died. Because I said, "I don't mind not to eat", as if my portion would be enough for the rest. [laugh]

III. Testing of Honesty and Restrictions on Food

The forms of psychological, symbolic, and corporal violence that were exercised on domestic servants such as beating, punishment, cutting hair, deprivation of food, and tests of honesty constituted humiliating trials that threatened their psychic as well as bodily integrity.

Testing of honesty was the most widespread practice by which employers harmed the self-esteem of the women who were subjected to it. Money and jewelry were put under carpets and beds, wallets under pillows, and even food such as currants and chocolates were hidden under beds or displayed as tests to prove the honesty of domestic staff. The interviews with employers confirm this strategy: employers talked with pride about laying traps that aimed at discovering the honesty of their servants. Yet, all the interviewees knew that these were tests and felt humiliated about the employers' automatic doubting of their honesty. The accusation of theft was also a strategy by which employers got rid of domestic staff when they no longer needed them and sometimes it was a form of revenge when servants and foster children abandoned their posts. Questioning of honesty was a structural element in the relationship of the middle-class with the lower classes.

> When I left they said that I was a thief. They said a lot about me. They said that I was a thief. But I wasn't, I didn't take anything with me. I had only taken my school bag to study my lessons in the summer. I saw my mother and I was moved. I had so many years to see her. [Stavroula]

> They were bitter when they learned that I was enganged. They thought that I would leave. I will tell you something that was a thorn in my flesh. When I left she said, I am ashamed to say this because I didn't do it, that she had lost a tablecloth. And then my cousin said, go and talk to them. I went crying and begged them, and I told them that I had no idea about this thing. But since I left this thing remained, that I stole the tablecloth. [Galini]

The meaning of theft was also class-defined. For servants as well as for the working class in general stealing food was a strategy of survival and a solidarity mechanism for the family.[22] During the Occupation Aggelina together with the cook had a skeleton key of the

[22] This kind of theft has been defined by Stephen Humphries as social crime. This term was used by Humphries to encompass the minor crimes against property committed by working-class children and condoned by the working-class community as legitimate, despite their illegality. What oral testimonies suggested to Humphries was that social crime was "a rational discriminating activity in the context of

cellar where employers stored food and they gave food to their parents and relatives: "There was hunger. But the rich did not starve, it was us who starved" [Aggelina]. In many cases food was distributed secretly from employers' stores, but this required access and control of food and so was something that was only be possible for servants in the privileged position of the cook. Often theft was a compensation for the lack of salary. In one newspaper report the removal of the master's clothes by two maids was their retaliation for the withholding of their salaries.

While depriving domestic staff of food was not considered an offence even when it set at risk the employees' survival, taking food was an offence that led to punishment.

> They had in a box figs and raisins, now I was a child, I was hungry and I opened it and took some and they considered me as a thief, that I stole it. Well, I stole it as it were. Yes, I took it, but I didn't do it with the aim to steal. I was hungry, that's why I stole, do you understand? And I remember she punished me. This was the first and last time I did it. She forced me to stand and she screamed: "thief", "thief". [Eleftheria]

During the occupation the employers' exploitation of their employees reached unprecedented levels. As we have already seen with Eleftheria, situations of crisis such as the war, orphanhood and refugeedom became for the middle-classes opportunities for extreme exploitation and for the most exploitative contracts. Both the war in Asia Minor and the Second World War created an enormous number of destitute children who hired their labour just for food and boarding. These children were a cheap labour force and there are indications that a large number of families employed more servants than they would have done if they had had to pay a salary. Besides, children and young women who were orphans or poor were employed without remuneration by families that otherwise would not have been able to afford servants. Aggeliki was an orphan child from Smyrna. After the invasion in Fokaies its inhabitants became captives of war. Her father and brothers were killed and the baby was thrown in a lake. During their forced march her sister was taken by soldiers and raped. Aggeliki found her in Athens several years after the war. She never found her mother. Her sister, who worked as a servant in Athens, introduced her to a compatriot whose employers wanted a girl to serve at the table. Aggeliki found a post in this family whose head was an MP and who kept four servants, all refugees. Two of them were minors, there were three women and one boy.

---

class inequality and the day-to-day demands of the family economy". Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939*, Oxford 1981, p. 151.

> It was in Skoufa street, number 8. It was the house of an MP. He had his wife and three daughters. He had two refugee girls and a boy for the office. The young daughter disliked me. She chased me and beat me on the head. This happened every day. But there was something worse. The bought for us half kilo of bread to eat for lunch and dinner. In the morning we had nothing. Just tea. The lady locked up their food. You didn't see either bread, or cheese, or olives.

In her second post, Galini abandoned her employers because they starved her, while Aspasia, who entered service without payment, that is, only for food, changed posts six times during the Second World War because the food provided was less than that her family received with her ration.

> I will tell you what happened to me. During the occupation they brought me to Athens. My cousin. In a lawyer's house. [...] And he had a little girl. He was a lawyer. Of course, he earned money. And the little girl who was three- four-years old had everything she wanted. Because of hunger, then there was ration of bread and I can't remember if they ate more than I did, because she cooked and served the food, I even ate the lemon rinds. I was a young woman. I left; I went back to Gargalianoi. [Galini]

> I went there but I was starving, I couldn't live. She [the employer] kept figs in a room to dry and she closed the door in order not to let me go and eat a fig. When she wanted to turn them around, she unlocked the door and we went together. Now, I was twelve years old and in my mind I wanted to eat not to see the food. I said to my aunt, I will leave, and if you feel ashamed I cannot do anything. [Aspasia]

Access to food depended also on the position of the servant in the household. Many employers locked away sugar, coffee and even bread.

> She locked the fridge in order that I could not to take any food. She gave me five olives in the morning, one tomato, "that's what people eat", she said. I was hungry so I ate that, what else could I do? And she put a lock on the fridge. [Artemis]

The inventiveness of employers concerning the control of food knew no limits. Evdoksia, who in 1922, after the war, in Minor Asia was given by the Near East Relief for adoption to a midwife remembers:

> She locked away the bread, for me not to eat it. [...] When she cooked meat, do you know what she did? She removed the meat and gave me the bone. She didn't even give you proper food. She cheated me. She sent me into the other room and put water in my milk. [Evdoksia]

Penelope Delta, a writer, lived together with her mother-in-law in Athens, who had undertaken total control over the housekeeping. She locked away the sugar and coffee and gave them by the spoonful to servants in order to prepare the coffee.[23] Keeping the keys of drawers and wardrobes and locking the food were widespread practices of employers, while the counting of items was a typical advice to mistresses in conduct literature.[24] Another employer would put water in the coffeepot with the remains of coffee after she made herself coffee and give it to her servant. In many cases, not only the food but also the bread provided was different for servants. A segregated market with lower quality goods was used by employers for feeding servants.

> The bought white bread and ate it. We had black. You could find whatever you wanted in this bread. I cut a slice, there was a piece of rope inside. I told this to the mistress and she said, "What's the matter? It is fine". I cut another piece, and I found a worm. The bread was like cotton. The knife stuck when you cut it. "You will eat this bread," she said. She cut a little piece and she pretended that she ate it. And she didn't buy it every day. She bought 7 kilos. [Panajiota]

The position of cook was considered the top of a servant's career not only because of a higher salary but also due to the privileged access to food. In a dialogue between two Folegandrian women, one who entered service in 1930 and the other in 1952, we can get an idea about the power of being a cook.

> Margarita. Did you eat different food from the employers?
> Anna. They never gave me food. I had the food.

Food appears here as a possession, that illustrates which its control and distribution attached a certain power to cooks. Artemis worked after the war until the middle of the '90s as a day worker for families of ship owners and industrialists.

> All this wealth, they ate the best, we had soup. The cook said, this is what the mistress ordered me to cook.
> -Did the cook eat the same food as you?
> She of course didn't eat the same.

Even when employers did not impose restrictions on food, consumption of food was criticized when it exceeded the standards of employers. During the summer holiday Eva's mistress moved from Athens to Volos.

---

[23] Delta, *Anamniseis, 1899*, p. 424.

[24] Aikaterini Varouksaki, *Oikiaki Oikonomia* [Housekeeping], Athens, 1923, p. 174.

> She told me, "Eva, how did you become like that..." I beg your pardon, she said, "how did you develop such buttocks?" I said, "Eh, you eat first and we eat after you". But I went out. I laid a blanket, and the apples were hanging above me. And you know Volos' pears and apples... Whatever fruit you wanted you could find it in the estate.

Eva's reply indicates that her employers were suspicious that they might loose out because of the consumption of servants. But it also conveys an ambiguous message: On the one hand, she is reassuring her mistress that she is not depriving her of food because she is eating after them, and thus she displays that she knows her position. On the other hand, her description of the abundance ridicules her employer's fears. Moreover, the narrative conveys a particular understanding of the employers' property exemplified through a division between the inside and the outside of the house. What is outside the house can be enjoyed without transgressing boundaries and regulations.

Distinctions in the consumption of food were not only due to an attitude of thrift on the part of employers, but also set boundaries and maintained social distance. Barriers in space and in consumption were mechanisms to keep these two worlds within a household apart and to prevent them merging. Other goods that belonged to mistresses, such as cream, should not be touched.

> The child [her employer's son who was in the army] who died had his room, he went to the chest and took sweets, whatever was there, I even remember coke. I mean, he could eat whatever he wanted. While us, we couldn't eat. [Galini]

On the other hand, the barriers of time and space were completely dissolved. The employees' full time was placed at the convenience of employers and their leisure time either did not exist or was not respected.

> They called me while I was eating, and I went chewing. Girl, go out and empty your mouth and come in. And I went and I took the bread out of my mouth and I presented myself. When we ate, she had to come while we were eating and we had to stand up. She spent all day in the kitchen, and you had to stand from morning till night. [Panajiota]

> -Did you eat well?
> I told you she put me in the kitchen and she gave me a plate with food and I paid through the nose for that. She put the baby on the carpet to shit. And then she called me while I was eating to clean. I was sixteen years old and I had taught the child the way I knew. And I had an old box but when she saw it she made such a fuss about it. [Vania]

The minute-books of the Police Headquarters of Pireaus record that two servants disappeared from the same house within 5 months. On July 18, 1941 G. V., a clerk in the Bank of Athens, aged 45, reported to the police that "his servant", E. Ch., aged 13 from Mykonos, had disappeared in July 16, 1941. The police tracked her down on August 17 of the same year. On February 18, 1942, the same person, G. V., reported that K. N., aged 15, of unkown surname, disappered after he scolded her for misconduct. She too originated from Mykonos. The description her employer gave was that she was "an idiot type, without shoes and bearheaded".[25] On July 24, 1941 Kontogeorgakopoulos Panos, lawyer, reported that "his servant", Panajiota Papoutsi, aged 14, unknown family name, disappeared without his knowing the reason for her departure.

The above description offers illustration of the conditions under which servants worked but also of the way they were perceived by employers. This was the case when parents entered into a contract with employers on behalf of their daughters and they either received their wages directly or had a contract for a certain period. During the Second World War domestic servants and especially juveniles were not paid. The report also suggests that the servant abandoned the house because of mistreatment. These young women must have been desperate to abandon their employers during the period when the Athenian population was starving and when deaths occurred every day on the street of the city. Her description as an "idiot" is a further illustration of the treatment of servants as non-human beings.

Yet, as we have already seen with the provision of food, it was not only lower-middle class employers who employed restrictions on clothes and shoes, but upper-class employers also. This despite the fact that servants mirrored the respectability of employers and thus their appearance to the outside world was a sign of the social status of the household.

> It was one of these old aristocratic houses. And one day I had to do the stairs and it had been snowing, and she took off my shoes in order not to spoil them. And I say now that I lost my feet. How wouldn't I. And my feet were frozen and I could not feel where I stepped. [Artemis]

> My shoes were old and he goes and buys me a new pair. And he put the shoes on me in the shop. And you can not imagine what happened. She was shouting: Girl, what are these shoes? I said, Mr. Thanassis bought them. She started shouting. Who told you to buy her shoes? And he said, but she didn't have any. And she tore them off and goes to Markatos who made shoes for the military and for shepherds and he made me shoes, big shoes that did not fit my feet, big and wide. Now

[25] Police Headquarter of Piraeus, Minute-book of the Police Headquarter of Piraeus, 1941-1942.

my feet with the errands were wounded. Blood. "My mistress". Put them on, stupid. And she beat me. You will wear them. [Panajiota]

IV. Defacement

One of the forms of psychological violence exerted against domestic staff was defacement. The mechanisms of this forced removal of identity varied according to the needs of employers. The institution of fostering constituted an informal form of adoption that aimed not so much at securing cheap labour but at establishing a contract of life-service based on bonds of fictive kinship. Fostering, as a strategy by employers was oriented towards the future, and constituted an investment that aimed at securing care in old age as well as care of future generations. Based on loyalty and on ties of affection, it blurred the boundaries between employment and kinship. On the part of poor people it was a strategy to attach their daughters to people of a higher social class with the prospect of endowment or a lump sum after the death of the employer. Children who entered this contract and relationship experienced the worst form of exploitation and psychological and corporal abuse.

This pattern of domestic service deviated from the institution of service that was firmly and intrinsically embedded in the local economy as in Folegandros and the other Cycladic islands. In these islands both the profession and migration were organised by the community and its networks of solidarity in Athens functioned as a safety valve for children and young women against mistreatment.

There are nuances in the ways this type of relationship was experienced by the interviewees, but it is a common denominator that it is perceived by the interviewees as a labour relationship and as a form of exploitation. As we shall see in the following testimonies, foster mothers are called "alien hands". "Alien hands" is a typical phrase used in Greek to convey the position of a child or an adult in a family that is not the parental family. It speaks about the way the child or the adult relates to this family rather than about status. The strength and the emotional weight that this phrase carries is drawn from a verse of a popular song: "The alien hands are knives" [*Ta ksena heria einai maheria*]. In this phrase the subject's relationship to the family is not one of affectionate bonds but is felt as hostile. Moreover, this relationship is perceived both in bodily as well as in psychic terms, the one informing and attaching meaning to the other: The hands that are meant to caress or embrace are transformed into knives that wound (invisible wounds that cause psychic pain), their warmth being substituted by the freezing feeling of metal. This phrase is telling about how this particular relationship was

understood: that is, not as a familial relationship but as an alienating experience. Rather than being expressed in terms of love, it felt like slavery.

> She took me to do the chores. She wore me out. I was a small child but she had great demands. It didn't matter for them that we were children. We were worn out in the "alien hands". It was not like now, the servant is better off than the mistress is. You are afraid of talking to her. In those days it was different. They had you for a penny. In the beginning she took me for twenty drachmas. I was her skivvy. A skivvy. [Evdoksia]

> I was given to these "alien hands", my mother put me in this house, she had a lot of children, in order to eat a piece of bread, and I got a good beating. She locked away the food. And then she said that she took me as a *psychokori*. [Artemis]

Fostering was a labour relationship but under the worst working conditions. When children could not respond to their duties, employers did not hesitate to break the contract and send them back to their parents, or even to leave them in the streets, as in the case of Evdoksia, who was an orphan child from Asia Minor without relatives. Even employers who had adopted children from kin sent them back to their parents and exchanged them with another child when they were not satisfied with the services they offered.

> This aunt of mine could not have children. She [her mother] gave me to her. But I pissed and she was very tidy. I stayed for one-two years and she said to my mother "Marina, I cannot keep the child". And she took the other, Rita. And she made her life unliveable. She beat her because she did not do the chores the way she wanted. Rita was beaten a lot in order to learn to do the chores properly. After she ironed the clothes she put her to iron them again. [Aggeliki]

Fostering not only formed part of the rehabilitation policy of public and private organizations concerning refugee children from Asia Minor or poor children during the Second World War. It constituted also one of the welfare policies used by rural communities to deal with orphan children. There the priest or the teacher decided the destiny of such children, and service was proposed as the solution to orphanhood. Such was the case of Athina whose parents were killed by an attack of irregular Turkish troops in Western Thrace during the Balkan Wars. She was sent as a servant to a lieutenant.

> When we arrived, I couldn't do the dishes or sweep the floors. I was small. I pissed, I wasn't to stay as a servant. [Athina]

Fostering was a relationship of dependency because orphan children did not have anywhere else to go and were tied to their foster parents, but also because they had learned to obey to

parental authority. Yet, many children revolted against the humiliations and beatings they suffered and left the house. The majority of the interviewees abandoned their posts after an attempted rape by the sons or relatives of their employers.

Let us return to the question of removal of identity. Employers aimed at establishing a long-standing relationship of dependency grounded on total domination over foster children. Already, in the negotiations between parents and employers the object of exchange was not the labour power of the daughter but the whole self. In order for total domination to be achieved, employers exercised various forms of psychological as well as corporal violence. When fostering took the form of migration, employers'control of correspondence and visits by parents and relatives aimed not only at breaking off the bond between parents and daughters but also at concealing the appalling living conditions and mistreatment of these children.

The restriction on information that was directed to parents or kin was exercised systematically and the technologies employed combined control both of the written word and of personal contact.

> My father came. It was Tuesday when he came to the shop. The masters told him that she is out with the lady. And he comes on Wednesday, this time in the afternoon. With the knock of the door, I go out. " I don't know", he said, "are you my child?" "Daddy", and then he hugged me and kissed me. "Welcome, welcome, *koumbare*". She took the *koumbaros* and sat in the dining room, as if he was her lover. And the *koumbaros* left and she didn't let the girl enter the dining room. So that I could not be present. Now, what they said, what they did, only God knows. The *koumbaros* left, goodbye, goodbye, I didn't see him or hear him. [Panajiota]

> My cousin came to see me in the hospital. And the master told him, there is no such name here. And I was in the operating room. [Panajiota]

The conditions of living were brutal: beatings, deprivation of food, sleeping on the ground and hard labour. Blocking of Panajiota's right to see her father was done on the purpose to concealing these conditions. At the same time, it implied that Panajiota constituted for both parties simply an item of economic exchange without rights and substance. All her earnings after twenty years in service were taken from her and given to her brother.

The case of Stavroula is similar. She hadn't seen her parents for three years.

> But my aunt came occasionall to see me, to ask me whether I was satisfied, but I couldn't tell her that it wasn't good, because she [the employer] was there all the time, she was next to me constantly. [...] They [the employers] read all my letters. And at some point I wrote a

> letter to my father, it was after two and a half years I was there. I had a friend, a very good friend, and I told her that I had a bad time there and I wanted to leave. I wrote a letter and I gave it to her to send it. Now I don't know what happened, she was caught, and she didn't send the letter. And I got in trouble [*epese katsada*] of course. She controlled all my letters. She controlled everything I wrote. [...] When we went in the summer to Menidi, she didn't let me go to the village. I waited two and a half years to see them. And my mother wanted to come and see me. And she came to Menidi and I didn't let her go, I started crying, I said that I wanted to leave. [Stavroula]

These limitations of contact were also imposed on those whose parents lived in Athens.

> -Did you see your mother?
> Artemis. No, she didn't let her see me. She said your mother will never come to see you again. I was crying as a child for my mother. Because I knew who my mother was.
>
> No, they did not let me go to my parents. They were afraid that I would be attracted and I would leave them. They wanted me always there with them. And outside the house, when we went for shopping, they called me Miss Fotiadis. [Ioanna]

The removal of the family name was the ultimate act of removal of identity. In this action the desire for life-long possession of an individual in the service of employers was inscribed, which did not differ from slavery. We have seen the case of Ioanna, whose employers not only did not let her visit her parents but also had given her their family name. Panajiota too had the family name of her employers and even her kin called her by this name. Stavroula's employers imposed on her to send letters to her parents signed with their name.

> They didn't have children and they wanted me to be their child and everything to be given to me after their death. And they wanted me as a complete child, to write their name in the letters I sent. And of course I didn't want, my name was Margariti. But they forced me and I ended up signing with both names. [Stavroula]

This act of defiance, of refusal to submit to total possession springs from the cognition of a labour relationship that violated all the boundaries of the self. Middle-class women pressed for this relationship to remain under their total control, disguised as a familial relationship. Women tried to escape, but the imprint of it stayed with them.

V. Restrictions on Contact

The restriction on contact with the outside world imposed by employers can be traced in the arrangement of leaves for domestic staff. All the interviewees were allowed half a day off once

a week late in the afternoon, after they had cooked, served the employers and washed the dishes. In households with more than one servant, employees were more disadvantaged as they had a day off once a fortnight. In reality this was not a day off but an afternoon. For the urban population, whose houses were located in settlements which were distant from the employer's house, visiting their parents required walking long distances because either there was no frequent transportation or they wanted to save money from the ticket fare. Irvin Goffman defines total institutions as the establishments whose encompassing and total character is symbolised by the barriers against social intercourse with the outside.[26]

> Where could you go? She said, you will be back at eight in the evening. She didn't allow me to be out later. You couldn't leave early, because they had lunch on Sunday and you had to clean the kitchen. It was already three-four o'clock, and one hour walking to go and one to come back, where could you go?

Distress and loneliness in service is very often documented in the interviews. It was a result of institutionalization and minimum contact with familiar persons.

> In the second house, although I wanted to go this house, my problem was that I wanted to go out to walk. I cried alone so many times, especially on Sunday when I saw people pass by with kids. I said, these people are having a walk. I was desperate, I said if only I was with my brother running in the fields. [Margarita]

> I had such a nice life in the village. I took off my shoes and I ran in the snow. I can't forget that. These thinks have stayed with me. [...] I felt suffocated in Athens.[...] Every night I cried. Every night. I had an image of Virgin Mary above my bed and they wanted to take it away. [...] Every night I prayed to Virgin Mary to escape from this life. [Stavroula]

> I was crying, I wanted to be in my house with my mother. They said you will get used to it. But it took a long time to get used to it. I was very sad, and cried a lot, but I became accustomed slowly. [Eva]

VI. Days of Work

The extraction of unlimited labour was one of the advantages of fostering, as well as of employing children, even though they had to be trained. Their low or non-existent wages, as well as the submissiveness of children, were compensations for employers' efforts to train children.

> She taught me how to wash socks and handkerchiefs. She said, you will pass the socks through the water and you will rub the front then

[26] Goffman, *Asylums*, p. 14.

> the back and then you will wash them with detergent and then I will reverse them and then rub them again. And when I scrubbed the floors I was on my knees, there weren't mops. And I had to do it carefully in order not to wet the furniture. [Vania]
>
> She was a very fussy woman. Once she took the forks and the towel and she said to me, come here. As I was drying them today, I was reminded of it. It's because you were going to come. She said, you will take the fork and you pass the towel through each slot. I learned this from her. And she put me to do that to each fork. [...] She took every single glass and looked though it. I was a very good housekeeper. I raised my children like that. [Evaggelia Matthaiou]
>
> She put me on a stool to wash the dishes. [Evaggelia Matthaiou]
>
> She put me on a stool and one day I fell down and I broke the dishes, and I she gave me a good beating. [Artemis].
>
> She taught me to wash the dishes. She turned on the tab and she gave me a sponge and showed me how I should wash them. I learned and I remember once I broke a plate and she bit my hands. She was mean. [Eleftheria]
>
> I was the first devil of the house. I did all the chores. Tell me a job that I couldn't do. It was a big room and the walls were all white and I washed them all night long, up and down on the ladder, I made them shinning. All by myself.
> -Had she told you to do this?
> It was my job. She gave me orders. [Panajiota]

Ioanna, who entered service at seven years old, looked after an elderly woman for eighteen years.

> I woke up at seven. My first job was to make an orange juice with fresh oranges, to help her stand up and take her to the toilet to pee and clean her. I told you, I was responsible. I warmed the water and helped her in the shower. [...] When I left she collapsed on the sofa. [...] Everything we did, for example, fish, she didn't let anybody else take the bones off from the fish. [Ioanna]

Standing in long queues for the ration in the winter was another job for children during the Occupation, and was even more painful as children were not provided with warm clothes or even shoes.

Evdoksia's foster mother, who had a contract with the Near East Relief Foundation, not only required from Evdoksia to do the chores in the house but to attend at the deliveries her mother did as a midwife. Women who were pregnant outside the wedlock resorted to

midwives' houses to deliver their babies. Evdoksia had to help with the washing and with all the assistant jobs that a delivery required. Among her tasks was to clean the stall where the goats were kept and the hencoop for chicken and rabbits, to gather grass for the animals, and to carry water from a well to water the animals. Apart from the heavy tasks Evdoksia undertook, her foster mother hired her labour to the neighbours. She sent her to do the washing for neighbours, charging them by the piece of cloth, and she appropriated her wages.

Employers in upper-class houses exchanged domestic staff when they had big receptions. "They sent us to each other's houses like a ball". [Aggelina]

The interviewees started work at six o'clock in the morning. Washing the outside stairs and the yard was the first job in the morning before the employers woke up. Employers paid great attention to the cleanliness of the outside parts of the house as spotless doorsteps, front yards, windows and outside stairs were signs of respectability. The first day that Aggelina arrived in her employer's house (the master was the director of a big petrol company and the mistress was the daughter of a minister in the government), Christina, the cook, told her: "You want to stay here, don't you? The master has an obsession with stairs". Aggelina followed her advice and the next day she woke up at five o'clock and scrubbed the stairs with pumice. "When the master woke up he said: 'Congratulations Aggelina'. What saved me was the stairs".

> My hands in the morning were swollen from the cold. It hurt. I had chilblains on my hands. And clothes, she put me in her clothes. I had no shoes. There was a stair outside and I had to sweep and scrub it in the cold. An outside stair of marble.[Vania]

The phenomenon of unpaid seven and eight year-old servants sweeping the pavements barefoot was frequently cited by state agents and writers and was blamed on lower-middle class households. In these writings lower-middle class employers were admonished for mistreatment of servants.[27]

Carrying water in tins long distances for the washing, or for the kitchen garden, carrying babies and the shopping from the market were heavy tasks that put enormous strain on servants, and especially, children.

> I put the baby on my back to do the chores because I should have finished before she came back in order not to beat me. She beat me. She was cruel. Very cruel. [Evdoksia]

---

[27] Aristotelis Koutsoumaris, "The life and exploitation of little servants: Measures that have to be taken", pp.195-203.

> I took the water from the well in the tin, it was 25 meters deep. In order to wash the yards. One day I slipped with the tins full of water and my bottom, excuse me, was all black, full of bruises. I could have broken my bones. [Evdoksia]

Servants' illness was considered by employers as a stake to the financial interests and they not only showed indifference but despised their employees for being ill and thus, depriving them of their services. Athina's employer considered her unworthy of her wages just because she fell ill: "One day my belly ached. And she said: 'I am the victim who goes shopping, lays the beds; it isn't worth all this money just for the shopping, the cooking and laying the beds. The washing I can do myself'".

Panajiota had appendicitis but her employer forced her to carry water from a distant tap in tins in order to water the garden:[28]

> Her cousin came and saw me. "What is it, Panajiota?" she asked me. I said "I can't, I am in pain". And the cousin said to her, "you criminal, you have the child working". And she [the employer] said, "she is fine, I will give her a purgative". They took me to the hospital and the doctor said that it was appendicitis and that it was swollen. He had to leave because an accident happened and he said that I had to stay in bed and he would do the operation as soon as he got back. When he left, she took me home. And we walked one hour. When he returned he asked where Diamantopoulou was. They told him that they had taken me home. I cannot accept this in my clinic, he said. And when the big master heard that [...] They brought me back to the hospital unconsious.

Pavlos Nirvanas called these children "human beasts of burden" and he recited a letter he received by a doctor who examined an eight-year-old girl brought by her mistress to his office:[29]

> This child, a pale and weak thing, had a very grave left thoracic scoliosis, pain in the lumbar area of the spine, nocturnal urination among other things. After I examined it I asked her what kind of jobs (which are above the child's strength and age) she does, I was told that apart from carrying the baby from morning until the evening, she carried water to the house from a tap because there was no water in the house.

---

[28] Neglect of the health of those employed in service was a major problem and a widespread phenomenon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "I have in mind a case of a domestic servant who was suffering from trachoma because she was not put to any therapy by the family she served and she ended up after years blinded. Blind as she is, she continues to work in the same house until late at night as she always used to! This event causes horror". Koutsoumaris, "Social provision for the protection of the child in our country", p. 22.

[29] Nirvanas, "Human beasts of burden".

In lower middle-class households which could not afford a washerwoman, the washing was done by the maid of all work, sometimes together with the mistress. Some children did the washing for well-to-do employers.

> Their relatives who saw the washing hanging out all the time were horrified, because they put me washing. There were no washing machines these days. They said that since I went to this house the ropes were never empty. [Galini]

Washer women were employed once a fortnight in each household to do the washing while the ironing was done by the live-in-servants. The washing was done either in the employers' house or in the washer women's houses. As water supply was restricted to few hours during the day in the refugee settlements and long queues were created of women and children standing and waiting for their turn, water for washing had to be supplied from distant areas. Not only in the refugee settlements but in many districts of Athens the tap was turned on by an employee of Ulen Company once a day. Yet, even those households that employed washerwomen could not rely exclusively on washer women for the washing. Live-in servants washed considerable quantities of clothes in the meantime, especially underwear and shirts.

The ironing required long hours as it was done with an iron inside which they put coal or with a metal bar and a handle which they put on the fire to warm up. The second kind of iron was considered more handy as it was lighter. One interviewee gave the shirts of her employer's son secretly to the dry cleaner to iron them and paid for it from her wages. For this young lawyer a crease in his shirt was enough to complain and shout. In upper class households the standards of housekeeping and thus expectations from domestic staff were very high.

> We ironed everything, even the underwear. The tablecloths were starched. We didn't iron the shirts with stiff collars. The master sent them outside. But he didn't wear these shirts all the time. In the morning he put on those with soft collar. When he wanted to go to a formal occasion he put those with a stiff collar. Anyway. Life was tragic these days and now is even worse. [Anastasia]

Day washing was a widespread occupation in the interwar period, especially for married and widowed women who had to combine their family obligations with work. A great proportion of refugee women worked as washerwomen. When other jobs could not be obtained washing remained the only available job during the interwar period as well as after the war. In the houses in which the interviewees from Folegandros were employed, older women from Folegandros who had settled in Athens after marriage did the washing. These women were

looked down or by their compatriots who were in live-in service because washing was perceived as a lower status occupation than domestic service.

> I didn't even know what the copper looked like. I went down to the washing room to get the washerwoman something to eat. I didn't have any involvement. I didn't sweep it or even go down to it.[Margarita]

The cooking was done on a stove which on top had a fire and underneath an oven which burned with wood. In the 1930s cookers were introduced with gas. In upper-class households the cooking was done twice a day.

Sweeping and waxing the floors were the most difficult tasks in service. Although sweeping was done everyday, the parquet was done once a week. The floor had first to be swept with a cloth and then to be scrubbed with wax. All the interviewees describe in detail the damaging effects on their knees of sweeping and scrubing floors and stairs:

> They were good people. But it was tyranny, tremendous tyranny. My knees were crushed. [...] We put turpentine and a yellow polish and we rubbed it in. And my feet were covered in wounds. I went once to the bathroom and took a bit of Nivea cream to put and she shouted at me. The mistress. In those days it was difficult, it wasn't like nowadays that they indulge them [the servants]. It was wild. And I went to the cook and she put on some oil. [Aggelina]

Upper class detached houses usually had three storeys, and thus stairs inside which not only had to be waxed and swept but also to be walked up and down all day. Furniture also had to be cleaned carefully and employees were asked to dust the upper part and the lower part with different clothes. Special care was taken for carvings:

> Do you know what she told me? That she had had another [servant] from Folegandros and she used to put the cloth in a hairpin and pass it through the carvings to catch the dust. [Eva]

In this type of household employees had to dress employers, button their shirts and their shoes, and standed for long hours waiting for them in their dressing rooms.

> I knew how to behave and what to do. And the master appreciated me. I was good to them, I bent eagerly to button their shoes, those days shoes had buttons. The ladies' not the masters'. And many times they did tests. The put the wallet under the pillow [Eva].

In upper class households babies and children were cared for by nannies, who often resided in the house of the employers. In middle- and lower-class households live-in servants, who were often children, looked after babies.

A day of work in an upper-class house:

> I woke up at five. I did the stairs. Before eight I had finished the rooms. The living room, dining room, the entrance. I swept the floor, I dusted. At eight I changed my clothes. I brought them the trays. I asked them before where they would have breakfast. They usually had it in the bedroom. Next to her bedroom she had a boudoir. There was a table, an armchair and her dressing table. She had breakfast there. Then I did the bedrooms and the bathroom. And then I helped the cook to prepare the lunch. They had lunch, we brought the coffee and liqueur and then we had lunch. Then in the afternoon after they woke up we did the beds. We only stretched them. They went to the living room and we brought their tea and biscuits. All day on the move. Each one had her own bell. We cooked twice a day. And then we had the ironing. I told Chistina, the cook, I will do the ironing if you will do the silver. In the beginning a washerwoman came. But later I undertook the washing because they were afraid of stealing. I got extra money for the washing.

A day's work in a middle-class house:

> I woke up at six, six-thirty, because he went down to Athina street where he had a shop. The first job I did was to put two eggs in a glass with sugar and I beat them for her husband. I beat them and put the glass on the table but the sugar should be completely melted. I had to pass the spoon from the inner side of the glass over and over again in order to be smooth and not to feel the sugar creak. I remember this. I tell you exactly what she had taught me to do. And afterwards I should be ready with the master's towel and a jug of water, kept from the evening before, which I poured in order for him to wash his face and shave. Because there was no water this time in the morning. It was off. And after the master washed himself, she made him coffee. The bedroom had apart from the bed a small living area with two armchairs and she put the milk and the buscuits there. I don't remember what exactly they had for breakfast, but they had it in this room. They slept in separate beds and they had feather quilts, you disappeared inside them. Some times when they left I lay on them to see how it was. When he finished his breakfast, the children woke up. They left at eight for school. And while the children were having breakfast in the kitchen, which I had prepared, eggs, butter, marmalade, I cleaned all the bedrooms and aired the sheets. Then I had breakfast after the children and we discussed about lunch, and if there was something I could cook. Then the cooking started and the cleaning of the house. She had me do different tasks every day. There was a glass enclosed porch where she liked to sit and I cleaned the glass. Every day I cleaned the porch first. Then she sent me shopping, and she told me what I should buy. I went out wearing an apron. It was out of the question to go out without an apron. And every day she gave me a clean one. In the afternoon the children studied, and I studied too. Otherwise, I did the ironing or mended clothes. But when the children studied, it should be quiet. Then they had dinner and she put the

children to sleep. I had dinner too, I laid the table and then they had dinner alone in the dining room. And I went to sleep. She put the dishes in the kitchen and before I beat the egg, I did the kitchen.

A day's work meant a whole day in the service of others. Time was defined by employers' needs.

Anastasia. There was no time left to do your own thing.
Margarita. They paid you. The people paid to have you.
Anastasia. Are you kidding? Of course. Any time they wanted you, the bell would ring, you would go up and be occupied with something.

The Association of Domestic Personnel (servants) was represented at the first conference of women in 1946.[30] The Servants' Union had 250 members.

Our life is miserable from all aspects. We wake up very early and we work until midnight. And if the needs of our masters demand that we do not sleep, we are obliged to work for twenty-four hours. The conditions under which we work are hard and exasperating.

Our payment is restricted to a plate of food and a few drachmas that are not even enough for a pair of socks. If we dare to complain they will say: "We feed you, we accommodate you, and you do not have expenses". But listen to what we eat. Nothing in the morning because sugar is too expensive and there is no need for the servant to drink something hot. For lunch they will eat meat and hor d' oeuvres and fruit, but for us it will be beans or chickpeas or any cheap food depending on the season. They accommodate us. Where do we sleep? In the light wells, in lofts, in *pataria* or in damp and dark basements, in which they wouldn't even put their animals if they didn't have servants. But we don't only live under hard conditions of non-paid work, we live also under constant humiliation and desregard.

In many houses they beat us and all the time they constantly threaten us with expulsion. And when they speak to us their look shows that they are speaking to people of the lowest status. And this would not be so strange if we met this attitude only from the class of our employers, which aims at disparaging us and in various ways makes us believe that we are inferior beings in order to handle us more easily in their own interest and for their comfort. But this evil is general in our sector. In the same way that our employers, despise us, equally the state despises us and does not pass any protective legislation for us. In the same way they all despise us. There are houses in which they treat us as human beings, but these are exceptional. We ask women to raise their voices for us and to help us to work under the same conditions.

[30] Talk by the representative of the Association of Domestic Personnel, First Panhellenic Conference of Women May 1946 (President Avra Theodoropoulou, Secretary Roza Imvrioti), Archive of Roza Imvrioti.

This description of the conditions of service labour and the understanding of the experience of service as well as the structure of feeling that arises from the subjection to this particular labour relationship by the reprepresentative of the Association bear profound similarities to the interviewees' testimonies. The class-based perceptions of domestic servants explored so far are illuminating about the process through which women came to achieve through their relationship to their mistresses a consciousness about the conditions that shaped them as subordinate. As E. P. Thompson argued, "Class is a social and cultural formation (often finding institutional expression) which cannot be defined abstractly or in isolation, but only in terms of relationship with other classes; and, ultimately, the definition can only be made in the medium of *time*-that is, action and reaction, change and conflict. When we speak of *a* class we are thinking of a very loosely defined body of people who share the same categories of interests, social experiences, traditions and value-system, who have a *disposition* to *behave* as a class, to define themeselves in their actions and in their consciousness in relation to other groups of people in class ways. But class itself is not a thing, it is a happening".[31]

[31] E. P. Thompson, "Peculiarities of the English" in *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, London, Merlin Press, 1978, p. 295.

PART FOUR

Chapter One

Moral Values and Attitudes Concerning Sexuality

Only masculine beings are endowed with the attributes
. and capacities necessary to enter into contracts,
the most important of which is ownership of property in the person;
only men, that is to say, are "individuals".[1]

Sexuality is one of the key aspects of the construction of gender difference and women's subordination. The oral testimonies stress the prohibitions, taboos and control exercised by the older generation of parents, in-laws, relatives and even neighbours. Control over women's bodies was total, and is one aspect, though central, of the unequal distribution of power within the family exercised along gender lines. The family and the community undertook the laborious job of the inscription of gender power relationships on the minds and bodies of girls, and the transformation of women's bodies into socially subordinate bodies. Women were constructed as "negative beings" and the very fact of the birth of a girl in the family was perceived as a burden. Yet, we have to delineate the specific configurations of this negativity of women's existence in different communities and classes. For propertyless families daughters were considered and treated as a burden because of the obligation upon fathers to marry them off without a dowry. The fact that daughters contributed to the family's income and their wages and labour were used and distributed among the family members, a management that very often privileged its male members, was not a ground for equal treatment of the sexes in the family, but constituted one of the basic elements of gender inequality and exploitation. Women's considerable role in production does not mean egalitarianism but can coexist with gender subordination which is most marked in the area surrounding the management of marriage.[2]

Honour was one of the organising principles around which gender relations were articulated. To understand the workings of gender relations of power in the context of the family we have to explore the system of values and practices applying in different communities, urban and rural, as well as differences in the meaning of value-concepts. Michael Herzfeld proposes to situate moral-value terms such as 'honour' and 'shame' in their linguistic and social context in each community and to explore the social meanings and

---

[1] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988, p. 5-6.

[2] Ann Whitehead, "Men and Women, Kinship and Property: Some General Issues" in Renée Hirschon, *Women and Property-Women as Property*, London, Croom Helm, 1984, p. 187.

expectations encoded in local cultural concepts.[3] According to Herzfeld "honour" and "shame" are categories of public evaluation, which exhibit degrees of conformity to a social code.[4] Although the analysis of the meaning of value-concepts is necessary in order to situate them in a particular historical and social context, it is more the process of internalization of the system of values held in a particular community and its embedded power relations that is going to be explored here. More precisely, the aim is to unravel the ways women carried through their attitudes and the practices the subordinate gender identity which had been inflicted upon them as well as the process through which women came to embody the socially legitimate body. My analysis will focus on the family as the central unit of the village community though which the community is reproduced.

Honour and the control of sexuality have been connected to systems of inheritance. Eva Kalpourtzi has argued for a "materialistic interpretation" of honour, and claims that the regulations that concern female chastity and the control of women's sexuality aim at securing the integrity of the family holding.[5] Thus, the bigger the material capital the bigger the tendency to control the symbolic capital and female conduct because a woman who violated the rule of chastity infringed the material capital she was pledged to transmit through inheritance to the following generations.[6] For Kalpourtzi, what bound women (as well as men) to the codes of honour had a material basis. And although she deals with norms and not so much with practices it is implied that it was the fear of being deprived of their rights of inheritance that enforced women's respect for the codes of honour. Certainly for the upper strata of seventeenth century Naxian society the transmission of property was a means to enforce female chastity. Yet, it is the theoretical models that lie behind this interpretation which create problems, namely, the deduction of moral norms and attitudes straightforwardly from economic systems. There is certainly an interrelation between the control of sexuality and economic and social institutions and the organization of communities. But how, then, can we explain the enforcement of these norms by families without possessions and for which inheritance was not an issue, or the consent to these norms and the reproduction of female subordination by women themselves. And why was it women who were invested as the

---

[3] See "Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems", *Man*, vol. 15, 1980, p. 339-351.

[4] Michael Herzfeld, "Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems", *Man*, vol. 15, 1980, p. 341.

[5] Eva Kalpourtzi, *Siggenikes sxeseis kai stratigikes antallagon. To paradigma tis Naxou ton 17 aiona*, Ellinika Grammata, Athens, 2001, p. 129.

[6] Ibid, p. 128

bearers of the "symbolic capital" of chastity? What is missing in the analysis is the central role of gender not only as a structure defined by economic factors but gender as a structuring factor of family systems, as well as of the economic and social systems of communities. Gender inequality and the sexual control of women were integral factors for the organisation of communities and for the management and distribution of resources, for marital systems as well as for the needs of communities such as the care of their elderly members. Thus, rather than female honour being the outcome of social and economic institutions or the means to secure the transmission of property, it is part of the gender system as a structuring factor of those economic and social institutions.

As Brögger has shown, by examining the usage of honour in the southern Italy context "honour concerned the sexual conduct of female members of the household as reflected on its male members".[7] Similarly, in the Greek context, and as Folegandrian informants maintained, honour was equated with female chastity and virginity. In rural communities "honour" was connected to women's chastity, but its importance and meaning was not attached solely to women. The family's reputation depended on wives' and daughters' honour, thus women's conduct reflected immediately on the reputation of the family and of the whole community. More important, as marriageability was inextricably linked to women's honour, not conforming to the rules that underlay honour threatened the survival of the family and the reproduction of the community itself. Thus, the interest in safeguarding daughters' honour and at the same time family honour and the community's reputation was extended beyond the realm of the parental family. The survival of the family, the distribution of resources and the care of parents were the fundamental aims of the family, which were achieved through the sexual control of women. Furthermore, as the village community had an interest in safeguarding its reproduction, its control transgressed geographical boundaries and extended to the migrant communities of Athens. Female chastity was a means to control women so that the village community could reproduce itself.

Gossip acted as a forceful controlling mechanism by the "moral guardians of the community" to keep women and girls in tune with the codes of proper feminine behaviour. Through networks of gossip, information circulated within the local community of migrants in the city, and travelled from Athens to the islands via the same community, within the refugee neighbourhoods and the knowledge of its power restricted women's movement and choices.

---

[7] J. Brögger, "Conflict Resolution and the Role of the Bandit in Peasant Society", *Anthropological Quarterly*, no. 41, 1968, p. 232. See also Vernier for the island of Carpathos, "Emigration et dérèglement du marché matimonial", *Actes de la recherche en science sociàles*, no. 15, Juin 1977, p. 36.

As Bernard Vernier stated for the island of Karpathos, "[D]ans cet univers d'inter-connessance, tout comportement est, par définition, discours á destination des autres".[8]

Eleni pointed out that the low importance that was attached to the education of girls was attributed to the fact that the close contact between boys and girls in primary school put at risk their virginity and reputation. The dangerousness of the written word, of love letters (*ravasakia*), was a form of defiance, a violation of parental rights to control women's sexuality and the future husband's choice.

> Us, the females, they did not let us to go to school, because of the love letters (*ravasakia*). Most of the girls in those times were illiterate because parents were afraid; in those times it was virginity. Not to take your virginity. But now, virginity doesn't count. Where food is found, it is eaten. No matter if it is hungry or not, it will eat. This is the general food. These years, there were the love letters, not to make love, not to get us laid [*na min mas plakosoune*].

The above testimony illustrates the dialectic relationship between the restrictions enforced on girls and their experience of subordination, and the multiple layers that underlie the construction of gender inequality. For lower-class women who grew up in the first half of the century primary school education was considered a luxury inappropriate for girls. In 1932 the proportion of illiteracy among married women in the provinces was 56% while the respective proportion for men was 15%.[9] Either because education entailed a threat to virginity or because daughters' labour was used for supplementing family income parents did not allow girls to attend more than two grades in primary school. Underlying the incompatibility between virginity and education in Eleni's case was the prohibition upon male and female contact outside parental control, exemplified here by the love letter [*ravasakia*]. The subversive power of the love letter lies in at least three elements.[10] First the written word is an undeniable proof of male-female contact and it can be used to enforce parental consent for a marriage that is undesirable. Secondly, decisions about male-female relationships were the absolute responsibility of parents, as we shall see below when we deal with marital negotiations. Thus conducting a secret relationship outside parental control violates parental rights over their daughters. And thirdly, the love letter represents a form of love that gives prevalence to emotions over familial concerns and for that reason it is considered dangerous and is despised by the peasant community of Folegandros. The primary considerations for

---

[8] Vernier, "Emigration et dérèglement du marché matimonial", p. 33.

[9] Solon Veras, "The Protection of the Child in the provinces", *To Paidi*, no 34, 1935, pp. 15-6.

[10] For the dangerousness of the love letter in Cypriot villages see Cassia and Bada, *The Making of the Modern Greek Family*, p. 196.

deciding a union between a man and a woman were not emotions but industriousness and the means to support a household for men, while for women the amount of the dowry, chastity, and serving skills counted. As Regina Schulte put it when she discussed what the violation of sexual norms by unmarried women meant for a rural community in Bavaria similar to Folegandros: "If she removed herself from their control, she abandoned the fundamental, common notions of order. Putting these into question, she threatened the established economic structure which had to be maintained".[11]

The prohibitions concerning education as well as male and female contact also demonstrate a gendered division of space. For females entering a public space was a transgression into male space and thus a transgression of gender roles. We have seen earlier that this transgression was only possible during the carnival (which permitted the symbolic reversal of class and gender hierarchies) when Ralaina masqueraded and walked in the public square of Chora crossing the male space of the coffee shop. For the rural population entering the labour market as a domestic servant did not violate the gendered division of space because of the strict control of the community in the urban space. Furthermore, labour in the house and for a family was compatible with the gendered division of space and activities as it was perceived as a female space. Yet, for the refugee and the rest of the urban population the connection between domestic service and sexuality and the higher status of factory work show us that the gendered division of space and the separation of spheres were neither universal categories nor real entities. Rather, they were categories of perception that did not necessarily apply to real space, but concerned above all relationships and varied according to the cultural ideas about gender in the different communities.

In the second part of the testimony, we deal with symbolic and mythical constructions of gender difference in the specific social definitions of gender as organ.[12] The body is perceived through the dominant cultural oppositions of up/down, outside/inside. The female organ, the vagina, is represented as open, as a hole, a vacuum, and its dangerousness and negativity is indicated by the fact that it is hungry and it eats what comes inside it. While the social myth of female subordination is naturalized through the "appropriate" positions in the division of roles in sexual intercourse (the man above and the woman beneath) and the dynamic nature of male action, which is expressed though the verb *plakono* (fuck but also

---

[11] Regina Schulte, "Infanticide in Rural Bavaria in the Nineteenth century" in Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean, *Interest and Emotion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 97.

[12] See also, Pierre Bourdieu, *Andriki Kiriarchia* (trans. P. Georgiou, A. Kapella, S. Nasaina, E. Stamatelou, Th. Psichojios), Athens, Delfini, 1996, p. 46.

crash/fall down upon). The representation of female organs as dangerous (vacuum-hungry) is part of the dominant cultural repertoire of perceptions of female identity as negative. The insertion of the parameter of time expresses the differences between past and present attitudes towards sex through representations of the female body: in the past the appropriate female body was the closed body (metonymically also expressed in the love letter) as opposed to the present, when the female body is the dangerous body. Because the female organ functions as a metonymy for female identity, we could suggest that Ralaina conforms to the dominant perception of female identity as negative and at the same time castigates present female identity that resents virginity.

However, grotesque bodily images do not allow for such a straightforward and one-dimensional interpretation. The dialogue between past and present (those times it was virginity-now virginity does not count) as well as the grotesque bodily representations are modes that express ambivalences about gender identity. Usually the grotesque has been interpreted as "compensation for impotence" and a "substitute of protest". Luisa Passerini has productively criticized these interpretations that view laughter as "safety valves for venting secret resentments" and "substitutes for protest" as obscuring its core characteristic, that is, ambivalence. Ambivalence includes both the elements of resistance and submission and conformism.[13] This interpretation helps us to go beyond the disjunction coercion-consent/ coercion-resistance. The usage of the word *plakono* (crash/fuck) in sharp contrast with *ravasakia* (the love letter which is the quintessential of romantic love but also the closed female body) and the syntagmatic usage "no matter how hungry it is, it eats" are meant to provoke laughter and to shock, and not simply to express and reproduce dominant perceptions of female organs and thus female identity. The distinction between now and then exemplified in the contrast between the active female body of the present (eats, hungry) and the passive female body of the past (to get us laid) does not express solely past and present differences but is a mode of symbolic inversion which is the typical symbolic operation of the grotesque. The grotesque is armed with the same categories of dominant culture, but its excessive mode and the fact that it speaks the unspeakable loudly and crudely as well as the symbolic inversion of hierarchies ridicules, and symbolically undermines the dominant culture. Thus it challenges a supposed shared belief, and at the same time illustrates the implication of the user in dominant categories of perception, unravelling the ambivalences and contests of gender identity within subordinate subjectivities.

---

[13] Passerini, *Fascism*, p. 85.

It was mentioned earlier that prohibitions concerning space did not necessarily translate into actual space or into a clear separation of spheres (the public as a male place and the private as a female) but concerned relationships and their public display. Any trace that could stand witness to a mere contact between a man and a woman endangered a woman's reputation and thus her position in the marriage market. A photo or a love letter violated parental rights over the bodies of their daughters. It was parents' (and especially fathers') obligation to marry off their daughters, and thus, if girls endangered their position in the marriage market, it was parents who were supposed to pay the price. Girls could not dispose their bodies (their sexuality as well as their labour power) as they wished.

The idea of chastity although linked with sexual intercourse, extended to a whole universe of rules and norms of proper female conduct. Reputation, to perform according to the norms that are expected of a woman, was crucial for marriageability and encompassed a wide range of restrictions. To be seen by a compatriot with a man in the streets of Athens would become a piece of information to be diffused to the community of migrants in Athens and through them to the village of origin. It was the inescapable link between marriageability and chastity that made the prohibitions and the controls on girls so effective. The stigma of immorality would restrict or curtail the possibility of marriage. Due to the high proportion of endogamy in migrant communities, conformity to the norms of the community regarding sexual behaviour was obligatory.

> -Where did you meet you husband?
> *Galini.* At my cousin's, he and her son were very close friends. [...] she told him, I will marry you off with a nice young woman of my own. He met me and he wanted me. But he did not take the decision to marry me. For me it was enough to go out once and be seen by a compatriot to be ruined. One day, it was before October, my cousin told him: "Well, *gambre* [groom], when are you going to set the date of marriage?" And I don't remember what was the word he said, something like "I am not ready yet". I threw myself on the bed and I was crying, I was thinking to throw myself from the Acropolis. Nothing had happened, but it was enough for a compatriot to see me. That's how we were those days, stupid, or call it whatever you like.
> [...] We were engaged for six-seven months. I worried so much just because my compatriots saw me with a man that I lost fourteen kilos in seven months. Because I was ashamed.

The internalization of the system of values of honour acted as a self-regulating mechanism. By elevating virginity to the most important possession of a woman, women were made responsible for sexual behaviour. Galini's recurring statement "I was always moral and submissive" encapsulates the two qualities that a woman should possess. These qualities,

which were instilled in the parental family and reinforced in domestic service, constituted the cornerstones for married life and for getting a husband. Especially for women without a dowry, submissiveness and virtue were prerequisites for getting married. "I was cooking [in EPON]. And I was exemplary from when I was a little child. They said, 'Galini is the only one'. One of them wanted to marry me. I was very moral, I had everything a girl should possess".[14] Doing service for others was a role taught in the family and domestic service. Honour was enforced in the parental family and its enforcement was exercised by parents and brothers and in their absence by the migrant community and relatives. Gender identity thus was based on a triptych of values: service, chastity and submissiveness, which were the possessions of a woman but which encompassed the dispossession of one's own self as a self to be offered to others, a self in the service of others. The internalization of these values and the layers of the experience gained through the location in different families built up a gender identity of which the components were used in the marriage bargain. Cooking and chastity composed a treasure, a possession, which a girl traded in the marriage market. As we have seen from the above excerpts unmarried women were not confined in the house. Going to the movies, to Zappeio, to the theatre and to the houses of relatives composed the leisure activities of migrant women in Athens. But women had to be cautious to avoid contacts with men because word of the mouth could easily travel to the island and endanger their marriageability. In the 1950s the same preoccupations persisted.

> I went out to my aunt. Where could I go, I went to the movies, but when I grew up, we were harassed. I didn't like these things, to be in the streets and listen to all this. I didn't want this.
> How often did you go out?
> Every Sunday.
> Did you have any friends?
> They didn't like serious things. "Katerina, move on", I used to say but she liked to listen to the things they said. I didn't like it. I wanted to go straight at home. [Margarita].

---

[14] EPON (United Panhellenic Organization of Youth) was a mixed-sex youth organization established by the Communist Party in May 1941. There were many complaints about the moral risks that such an intermingling between boys and girls entailed and about the inappropriateness of the participation of women in politics. Although EPON remained mixed after the organizational chaos that the separation of the sexes created, the branches where the tasks were allocated could be single-sex. And this was not for "moral reasons", as was stated by the organization, but "because in practice the tasks of girls are different from the tasks of young people". Although in EPON the division of tasks was gendered, girls participated in a wide range of activities unconceivable before, such as demonstrations, writing graffiti on the wall with political slogans etc, and therefore in women's memory the experience of EPON is valued. See, Vervenioti, *I ginaika tis antistasis*, p.189. Galini participated also in theatrical performances in Gargalianoi.

Loss of honour meant the end of a woman's social life as it entailed her ostracization from the social life of the community and any form of sociability, the impossibility of marriage, and thus the impossibility of fulfilling her only recognized role in society, motherhood. Stavroula went into service in 1960 at the age of 12 from the village of Arta to Athens.

> There was a cousin of mine when I went to the village, and she told me "be careful", I tell you I didn't know these things, "be careful not to let anybody touch you", she was older than me and she knew about these things, "if you loose your virginity and you have blood, you will never get married [*an sou spasei I parthenia kai vgei aima*]". Now why did she tell me that? This stayed with me. It really stayed with me. I was constantly thinking of that. In these times of course [she laughs]. [Stavroula].

Lack of information about sexual matters reinforced women's fears. Sex was a taboo topic. It could not be spoken about, as it would introduce young women to a knowledge that could stimulate sexual urges. Chastity was not a value restricted to the body but it pervaded the soul and mind. Information had to be concealed and misleading in order not to contaminate, but also to be more effective as a restraint.

Even in the 1990s the fear of spoiled reputation was so strong that Stavroula, when visiting the village she originated from, although she had lived in Athens for 40 years, took measures to safeguard her daughters' reputation: "Our village might be beautiful, but gossip is always there. Katerina [her sister] sent her daughters there and a lot of nasty talk came about. Now Annita went [her younger sister's daughter, and a lot of things came out. This is the reason why Linos is annoyed and he doesn't want to send them". Although the bonds with the village of origin have become loose and endogamy is not the case for the younger generation, the reputation of the family, which remains important, is still linked with women's chastity and moral conduct.

In Folegandros the reputation of the family still depends on the behaviour of its female members. Self-respect and respect attached to a family is largely determined by the attitudes of daughters and granddaughters. Eva feels embarrassed by the attitudes of her granddaughters: "Now all this evil I see around and I am astonished. There is no respect. Get it in your mind. Is it possible that you, I say you in order not to use names, desire a man and to take him to your house, in front of your mother and father and sleep with him in bed? Are these things possible? But they do it. All my daughters got married. They didn't know these things."

The code that regulated working-class women's conduct and attitudes was extremely strict. For working-class women youth and virginity were the only assets they had to trade in the marriage bargain market. These rules reflected above all the lack of women's control over their own bodies and their instilled feelings of inferiority. Fear of not being chaste had enormous repercussions on women's and girls' understanding of themselves. The extreme value put on chastity and the fear of being deprived of it was instilled mainly by parents, relatives, and friends.

Although chastity illustrates male power over women it was mothers and female members of the community who acted mostly as the guardians and advisors of young women and who instilled sexual norms and set the rules of proper female sexual conduct.

> I loved someone else [...] From a distance, only with gazes. But my mother used to tell me that if a young man does not look at you when you are young, it means that you are useless, you don't count. But she said, I used to take my mother's advice in those years because this [female genitals] had to be taped not to be untapped. [...] My mother said, talk to him but in the middle of the street, don't enter a house. [Eleni]

Brothers were also entitled to safeguard girls' moral reputation and to restrict their movement. When Galini participated in EPON in Gargalianoi she did not tell anybody where she went. Her brother not only complained about her absences and not reporting where she went but exercised violence upon her.

> I didn't say anything and my oldest brother mistreated me. He cursed me, he beat me, to know where I went and hung around. But I was clever enough to tell him, if you were a good brother you would follow me to see where I go. Because I shouldn't say that I was in EPON. Although we were both in the party. He used to beat me. Do you understand?

The right of brothers to control their sisters was not contested even by the sisters. "He wasn't able to care and see where I go."

Mothers who had undertaken the inculcation of moral conduct did not give any information to their daughters about sex, contraception, pregnancy etc. One reason is the extreme prudence of women and embarrassment about issues concerning sex. Secondly, the interviewees' mothers had a very vague knowledge about sex and ignored contraception. The majority of the interviews learned about sexual matters after marriage, as they never discussed with their mothers about sex or menstruation. Their knowledge consisted of such a vague notion of virginity that it made them completely scared of every contact with men. Kissing was usually the only contact that was considered safe. This limited knowledge about sex served as a good way to discipline girls.

> Those days virginity was a very big thing. My sister got married, she was engaged and she got married and she was a girl, a virgin. And this incident instilled within me such a fear, my husband, I did not let him...I was engaged for three years, and not to mention how my mother-in-law plagued me. And I did not let him... once I threw the wedding ring away. He tried to touch me. I didn't allow anything more than a kiss. This was different. Because I had heard and I knew from my sister that she had been pregnant although she was a virgin. And I was scared even of games. I shouldn't be ashamed to tell you these things; you could be my grandchild. Now these ideas are out of date. [Vania]

The lack of information deprived women of any pleasure from sexual contact. It could lead women to desperation. Another interviewee referred to an incident which took place when she was engaged: "He kissed me and I was all red, like gun-powder. And I thought that something that happened to him with me... he didn't even touch my underwear and I said 'what did you do to me and if I get pregnant?' And I was crying and going crazy. He said 'don't worry, I didn't do anything to you.' But I was crying and going crazy".

Women remember their ignorance and the total lack of information about menstruation, their reproductive functions, and sexual relations with bitterness.

> In those days they had pieces of cloth when they had their period, it's not like the ones you use now. And I saw my sister washing the bloody clothes and I said, "what happened to you?" And she said, "nothing I just have a spot behind and it's bleeding". And I ran to my aunt and I said, "my sister has a spot and is bleeding, a lot of blood". And she looks at me and laughs. And she said, "go home, there's nothing wrong with you sister". Just imagine that when I went home after marriage I was shivering. [Vania]

Menstruation was taboo for both the rural and urban population. The embarrassment was all the greater when women were involved in a power relationship and in an alien environment as foster children.

> I was ashamed to ask my aunt. She made me twelve panties, twelve petticoats. She said, "Athina, you are not happy anymore. What happened to you?" [...] I made the fire and burnt them in the boiler. I was ashamed to tell her. I was small. It was the first time and I was ashamed. I put them under the boiler. I didn't want. I told her. "Is it that, my daughter? I will make you some knickers. And she bought knickers and she sowed them, with elastic.
> -Whose were the knickers?
> Panties. Mine. I had it [period] for the first time and I didn't know, and I was ashamed to tell it to my aunt and I put them [knickers] under the boiler. [Athina]

> When my period started, I was hiding them, and they found me out, those days they were made of cloth. One day I was crying, even when I was married before I gave birth to my daughter, I was hiding them.

-And they [the employers] found them.
Yes, she found them, because I used to put them behind the loo. She scolded me a bit, why did I do this; she gave me advice to be careful etc. I don't forget, of course, that they were nice people. [Galini]

Such was the embarrassment about the biological functions that were connected with sexuality that when Aggelina got pregnant she was embarrassed to tell her daughters and sons that she was expecting a baby:

> My oldest son, he didn't want to hear about the baby. He hadn't seen the baby and he didn't look me straight in the eyes. Afterwards, it was Saint Antoni's day and I had the baby in the kitchen and a child put his finger in the baby's mouth and she was close to choking. She became blue. And my older son saw her and took the hand from her mouth and from that time, something broke inside him. And since this incident he loves her more than anybody else.

Sexual restraint and modesty were principles that had to be respected also after marriage. Sex was supposed to be connected with reproduction and for that reason pregnancy in old age was a sign of sexual promiscuity. A family's reputation in the refugee community was important, and one had to live according to the rules of the neighbourhood community: "The neighbourhood was difficult in those times" [Evaggelia].

Being seen entering the house of a man was the worse damage that could happen to a woman's reputation both in rural as well as in urban communities. Living in the refugee community of Kaisariani, Vania was engaged for three years and the neighbourhood started gossiping:

> These days the taps where outside. And as I went to take water I heard a neighbour saying: Look, doesn't Vania look like she is pregnant? And I heard it and I went to my mother-in-law crying. She says, what's the matter with you? And I explained to her. She said, you shouldn't care, and then she took them [the sheets of the marriage night which were the evidence of virginity] and she showed them to these people who had said it. Because the world was like that, gossiping. We were orphans, but we were moral.

We have seen before that the refugees living in urban communities were aware of ideas which drew a strong connection between sexuality and domestic service, and that the sexualization of domestic servants was shared an idea both by middle-class and working-class population. These ideas, as well as the connection between orphanhood and lack of morality, were shared by the working-class communities and created a strong ambivalence in women about their self-perception and sense of worth. The interviewees who lived in compact refugee neighbourhoods in which endogamy was prevalent were preoccupied with their reputation and showed great sensitivity to the opinion of their communities. This can be understood if we

bear in mind how much the conditions of living encouraged conflict, gossip and control, and how much their reputation in the neighbourhood defined their marriageability. The lack of amenities, the shared toilets, and the taps in the street, as well as overcrowded accommodation entailed the absence of any sense of privacy. The solidarity networks that were developed in order to combat extreme conditions of poverty also could become a prison or dissolve when the codes of honour were not respected. Such is the case of Evaggelia's mother when her husband was killed. Through her work as a laundress she entered a relationship with a cook and the neighbours stopped talking to her while her family isolated her. Artemis's husband was in the resistance movement and she was thrown out of her in-laws' house. She abandoned her child on a doorstep and worked as a prostitute, which led to her exclusion from the community.

The leisure activities of women in domestic service were circumscribed firstly by the importance of a woman's reputation in their communities, and secondly by the restricting financial obligations towards their parental families and financial preoccupations about the future. Vania describes how she felt trapped and obliged to marry her husband after the following incident:

> We went to the Red Rock, from which a girl who loved someone threw herself down and was killed. And my [future] husband says let's take a picture. There was his cousin with us and we went to Pagrati but the moment we stood for the picture, she moved away because she said that it wasn't nice to show herself pregnant in the picture. So we were left the two of us. And I considered this... I was ashamed. I had to marry him.

Virginity not only symbolised the honour of the family to which a woman belonged, but it was transferred to the family of the future husband. It was a property that did not belong to women themselves but to the family and the future husband. In this way it was the symbol of male power over women and thus the symbol of women's subordination, a means to regulate and rule women.

The ritual of *antigamos* exemplifies in the clearest manner women's lack of possession of their selves and their own bodies. It can be seen as a rite of passage in the sense that the female body is preserved by patriarchal power to be given to a man. Through sexual intercourse the body passes from the rule of the father to the rule of the husband. The celebration of virginity by the in-laws of Vania could be a remnant of the "morning gift".[15]

---

[15] The morning gift testified the bride's virginity and as the act of consummation of the marriage was the mark of legal marriage. It was awarded to the wife as the price for her virginity. See Diane Owen Hughes, "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe" in Marion A. Kaplan (ed.), *The Marriage Bargain: Women and*

The marriage reception was followed by the *antigamos* the morning after, a festivity devoted to the celebration of virginity.[16] Vania's mother- and father-in-law took the sheets of the newly married couple's bed, put them in a basket and displayed them to the relatives and around the neighborhood. Vania found it extremely embarrassing and she was hiding: "The next day there was the second festival, the *antigamos* they call it, of virginity. And I was hidden, and my mother-in-law took them together with my father-in-law and displayed them; please, tell me, are these serious things? My mother-in-law took them around the neighbourhood". The ritual of *antigamos* testified to the bride's virginity. Yet, in Vania's case it had lost its historical meaning as a compensation for the money given by the groom to the father in order to buy the bride and as guarantee for the bride's worth. Here the ritual stressed the bride's virginity as the most valuable possession because of the absence of a dowry.

Dowries in European History, New York, Harrington Park Press, 1985, pp. 18-33. In places in which no dowry was given to women, there was an emphasis on the bride's virginity in marital festivities; See, Nora Skouteri-Didaskalou, *Anthropologika gia to ginaikeio zitima*, Athens, Politis, 1991 (2nd ed.), p. 249.

[16] For the ritual of *antigamos* in Carpathos see, Viernier, "Emigration...", p. 36.

Chapter Two
Marriage

I. Conceptualizations of the Dowry

Anthropologists have conceptualized the dowry as a form of transmission of property at the time of marriage, a system for the transfer of properties between generations.[1] It has been interpreted as a pre-mortem transmission of inheritance because females receive their portions of inheritance as dowries transferred at marriage, while males receive their shares upon the deaths of their parents.[2] Jack Goody has defined this process as "devolution", a term that describes "the inclusive transactions that take place between the holder of rights in property and those who have continuing interests in such rights".[3] For Goody, the dowry and inheritance are part of the same system through which the reproduction of the social system is carried out.

Students of the dowry in Greece operate in this analytic framework, considering the dowry as a form of inheritance. Sant Cassia and Bada argue that in nineteenth and twentieth century Greece a uniform pattern of property transmission had emerged. It consisted of "a more egalitarian division of property among children with a heavy bias towards the endowment of daughters at marriage, an increasing tendency towards cash dowries, the *de facto* exclusion of daughters from inheritance, a tendency towards neolocality among the upper strata or uxorilocality for those not being able afford neolocal residence, dowers by husbands to which widows had usufructuary rights, and so on".[4] By the 1830s in Athens a trend to a more equal division of property among children has been witnessed, with an emphasis on cash dowries, a model that was elaborated in the Greek Civil Code and expanded to all Greece. Bada and Cassia argue that in spite of monetary calculation and the transmission of goods by the dowry system

---

[1] See Jack Goody and S. J. Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry*, Cambridge, 1973; Jane Lambiri-Dimaki, "Dowry in Modern Greece: An Institution at the Crossroads between Persistence and Decline", in Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, *Towards a Sociology of Women*, Lexington, 1972; Ernestine Friedl, "Dowry and Inheritance in Modern Greece", *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Series II, XXII 1959.

[2] Goody and Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry*, 1973.

[3] Jack Goody, "Introduction" in Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk, E. P. Thompson, *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe 1200-1800*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 1.

[4] Paul Sant Cassia and Constantina Bada, *The Making of the Modern Greek Family: Marriage and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Athens*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 232.

and in spite of strategic considerations factors such as honour and ideologies of motherhood tried to restrict its highly commoditization and its becoming a market.[5]

Aglaia Kasdagli has argued that in seventeenth-century Naxian society that female and male marriage portions, whatever the name given to them, shared essentially the same function and other fundamental characteristics.[6]

Anthropological studies on Greek communities explore transformations of the dowry in post-war Greece and its link to socio-economic processes. Allen connects migration to urban centres with changes in the dowry system. He argues that there was a change in the dowry system with a stress on cash and real estate property in the form of a house and an inflation of dowries, which was connected with migration and the linked devaluation of land property. Those who migrated to the city needed estates or cash to establish themselves.[7] Additionally, the dowry is approached as an arrangement for the purpose of contracting favourable marriages.[8] Investment in daughters' dowries was seen as a means to achieve social mobility while the introduction of cash and urban real estate into the dowry as providing security against potentially dissolute grooms.

A strong tendency in anthropological studies links the provision of the dowry to local codes of family honour. The provision of the dowry is connected with the arrangement of favourable marriages and is considered the most important parental obligation constituting an incarnation of codes of family honour. Parents are judged by their ability to contract favourable marriages for their children and were constrained to undertake decisions that might jeopardize the welfare of their children.[9] Campbell in his work on a shepherd community in Greece, the Sarakatsanoi, found that a feeling of resentment developed in women towards their fathers because they married them off to men they did not want in order to avoid the payment of a substantial dowry. The pressure on parents to provide a substantial dowry is linked to the status of the family,

---

[5] Cassia and Bada, *The Making of the Modern Greek Family*, p. 248-49.

[6] Aglaia Kasdagli, *Land and Marriage, Settlements in the Aegean: A Case Study of Seventeenth-Century Naxos*, Venice, Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies and Vikelea Municipal Library of Iraklion, 1999.

[7] See Peter Allen, "Internal Migration and the Changing Dowry in Modern Greece", in John Koumoulides, *Hellenic Perspectives: Essays in the History of Greece*, Boston, University Press of America, 1980, p. 263.

[8] See Friedl, *Vasiliika, a Village in Modern Greece*,New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1962, p.69

[9] Peter Loizos, *The Greek Gift: Politics in a Cypriot Village*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1975, p. 87.

which in turn is measured by the size of the dowry.[10] Other scholars writing within this framework have seen money as operating as a symbol of love between parents and children in Greek communities.[11] The conceptualization of the dowry as a form of parental control has also been explored in historical and anthropological investigations.[12] Parents had the right to refuse to endow their daughter if she did not marry with their consent. Besides, as we have already seen, anthropological work has applied a materialistic approach to moral codes and regulations such as family honour and female chastity, perceiving them as means of securing the integrity of the family holding.[13] Yet, as we shall see, the failure of parents to provide a dowry for their daughters did not entail the elimination of parental control concerning the choice of the husband.

In its legal definition a dowry is the "property which the wife or somebody else on her behalf gives to the husband in order to alleviate the burdens of marriage".[14] According to the article 1495 of the Greek Civil Code of 1946, a dowry is an obligation of the father (or in his absence of the mother) to provide a daughter "proportionate to his wealth, to the number of his children, to his social position as well as to the social position of the future husband". Only if he proves that he would be impoverished through providing a dowry he can be exempted from the obligation. Thus, the dowry is the expression of female inheritance rights and a legally stipulated obligation on the part of the bride's father. The husband acquires ownership rights over the movable dower property and the right to the management and usufruct of the dower property. The woman's legal possession of her dowry is recognized unless she transmits the right of ownership to her husband. As Jane Lambiri-Dimaki points out, the dowry is neither a gift to the husband nor a gift to the daughter. It is not a gift to the husband because with the dissolution of marriage the dowry returns to the wife and the husband ceases to have any claim or right over the dowry property. Nor is a gift to the daughter. What is given to her is what she is legally entitled to inherit from her parents. Ideally, all children have equal rights to their parents' property. The provision of wealth at the time

---

[10] See Jane Lambiri-Dimaki, "Dowry in Modern Greece: An Institution at the Crossroads between Persistence and Decline", in Marion Kaplan (ed.), *The Marriage Bargain: Women and Dowries in European History*, Harrington Park Press, New York 1985, p. 169.

[11] Cassia and Bada, *The Making*, pp. 243-251.

[12] Kasdagli, *Land and Marriage*; Lambiri-Dimaki, "Dowry in Modern Greece..." p. 167.

[13] Kalpourtzi, *Siggenikes sxeseis*, p. 129.

[14] Greek Civil Code article 1406, quoted in Jane Lambiri-Dimaki, p. 166.

of marriage has not only a legal basis but it constitutes, even after having ceased to function legally as a parental obligation, a social practice, and a matter of considerable familial concern.[15]

Although scholars have recognized the variations between different social classes in the transmission of property, they have rarely dealt with the function and meaning of the dowry for the lower classes. This focus on the upper classes has been largely determined by the availability and the social prejudice of the sources themselves, as it was the upper strata of society that had property to transmit and used matrimonial contracts [dowry agreement]. But what has not been adequately recognized is the effect of the system of dowry on the lower classes when there was no property to transmit.

The fact that many women had to provide a dowry for themselves by earning demonstrates the class aspect of the dowry and at the same challenges the notion that the dowry is solely an expression of female inheritance rights as its function transcends inherited property. In practice the marriageability of a woman depended absolutely on the property she possessed. Thus, irrespective of the ability of parents to provide wealth for their daughters, a woman's ability to marry depended on the existence and the size of her dowry. In this way the dowry functioned only partly as a regulating factor of property relations between generations. Additionally, if the institution of the dowry reveals the preoccupation of society with women's protection and financial security, and functioned as an acknowledgment of and response to the vulnerable and dependent position of women in society and family, the impossibility of working-class parents to provide for their daughter's dowry illustrates and reinforced their disadvantaged position in the marriage market. Furthermore, if women had to work for their dowries this meant that it was their own responsibility to protect themselves, but at the same time, at the ideological and legal level they remained and were considered subordinate. As Jane Dimaki-Lambiri argues "the institution of the dowry defeats its own original purpose, for instead of strengthening the position of the woman, it weakens it considerably, especially in the lower ranks of the socioeconomic hierarchy".[16]

Feminist scholarship has challenged theories that perceive the dowry as a protective mechanism for women. Scholars have argued, and the Greek Civil Code is

---

[15] Renée Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989, p. 117.

also a manifestation of this, that the dowry is "not women's wealth, but wealth that goes with women. Women are the vehicles by which it is transmitted rather than its owners".[17] Feminist scholars also have stressed two dimensions of the impact of the dowry on gender relations. First, that due to the fact that a woman's worth as a bride was measured by the amount of material goods and cash that accompanied her, the provision of the dowry involved such a great strain on households which lacked material resources that it encouraged society to view daughters as a burden and women themselves to loose any sense of self-esteem.[18] Yet, the unequal position of daughters in the family cannot be attributed solely to the institution of the dowry. How, then, can we then explain the exercise of parental control over their daughters and their subordination to the family in communities in which women provided their dowries themselves through the institution of domestic service, as was the case in Folegandros? Or the fact that their dowries, accumulated through their labour, were appropriated by other members of the family, usually brothers? Second, the lack of parental wealth put an enormous burden on women to provide for themselves a dowry through their labour. Feminist scholarly investigation of marriage patterns and the dowry institution works with assumptions that are an impediment to the complete understanding of the function of the dowry. These constraints involve two rigid dichotomies in feminist thinking. The first dichotomy involves two polar subject positions: women are either subordinate or agents. The case of Folegandros shows that these two positions are not mutually exclusive and that women's access to power changes during their life trajectories. The second problem has to do with the dichotomy between paid labour, seen as emancipation, versus dowry, seen as a traditional norm. Within this problematic, the institution of the dowry is seen to be fading as women gain more access to paid work in the public sphere. Scholarship on Greece has shown that the greater access of women to the labour market was not followed by a decline in the system of dowry but, on the contrary, with its inflation.

Women's paid labour did not result in the decline of the dowry system. Although scholars claim that the role of women as paid workers in advanced capitalist societies led to the decline of the pursuit of dowries, the persistence of the institution of

---

[16] Jane Lambiri-Dimaki, "Dowry in Modern Greece...", p. 170.

[17] Ursula Sarma, "Dowry in North India: Its Consequences for Women" in Renée Hirschon, *Women and Property-Women as Property*, Croom Helm, Australia, 1984, p. 70.

[18] Sarma, "Dowry in North India", p. 71.

the dowry in Greece is explained by the supposed underdeveloped industrialization of the economy. Yet women's work should not only be linked with the provision of a dowry for themselves, as is the tendency in some scholarly work.

If the dowry has been seen as a manifestation of parents' care and as a form of parental aid, the absence of the dowry exposes the absolute authority of parents over female bodies and earnings. Women who came from families that did not have the resources to provide dowries had to earn their own dowries. It has to be stressed that the refusal to provide a dowry was not always a matter of scarce resources but also of priorities which were gendered. Moreover, for women who undertook paid labour, fathers, mothers and brothers used their incomes to cover the needs of the family and very often of its male members. Yet, the importance of the dowry for marriage was so great that women who did not possess it were extremely disadvantaged in the matrimonial market. In contrast to seventeenth-century Naxos where in circumstances of limited resources or social constraint priority was given to the female over the male children, in twentieth-century Greece daughters were severely disadvantaged compared to sons.

The provision of trousseau (*proikia*) has been considered to be a universal practice in Greece. All brides had to be provided with clothing and household goods. Yet, clothing and household goods did not have the same function and meaning for all social classes. Their capital functions as well as their social and emotional significance varied across classes and also over time. On the other hand, a dowry in the form of immovables and of cash was a phenomenon that was very diverse and varied according to geographical area, socio-ecomomic background and era. Dowry has to be related to systems of exchange, to the forms of property transmission in different social classes and the position of women in production.

The aim of this section is to deal with the questions of marriage, property and sexuality as indicators of the balance of power in gender relations. It seeks to investigate not only the consequences of property (or its absence in a society which requires the endowment of women and in which the dowry as a legal institution as well as a social practice is a prerequisite for marriage) for gender relationships but also the complicated interrelations between the local economy, the family system and women's agency, as well as the impact of legal and economic institutions on individual and

community practices. Property is not a relation between persons and things but between persons. It is above all a social relation, or a set of social relations.[19]

The chapter will not explore the household or the "private" sphere as an autonomous and privileged place to investigate women's marginality or subordination, neither will it treat the private world as a separate and parallel structure to the public sphere.[20] Rather it holds that women's subordination is an integral characteristic of social organization and that the private is at the centre of social structures and relationships. Thus, the institution of the dowry will be approached in relation to women's position in production, that is, to the role of domestic service in the economic system of communities as well as to the marital systems.

By making women's perceptions the central focus, the chapter seeks to explore dimensions that have not been adequately investigated in Greek historiography. Most studies on property treat women as an undifferentiated group and ignore the importance not only of class but also the significant changes in women's relation to property during their life-trajectories. The interviewees' perceptions of marriage, sexuality and family relationships allow to understand what Spyros Asdrahas has called "the individual experience [*'atomikes vioseis'*] of economic factors".[21] Furthermore, in dealing with oral sources on sexuality we deal with the memory of the body[22] and with particular forms of subjectivity shaped by women's position in the family, whose control over decisions on marriage, sexuality and reproduction was total. Oral sources allow us to grasp individual and family decisions and the effect of external factors such as economic and cultural determinants and also the shaping of these determinants by individual and family strategies.

II. Caring for the Family in Folegandros

We have seen the ways in which notions of caring extending outside the domain of parental family have shaped class and gender divisions. Feminist research has been criticized for framing caring within the private domain of family as unpaid work for kin. Such an analysis which privileges gender as the prevalent system of social

---

[19] Ann Whitehead, "Women and Men; Kinship and Property: Some General Issues" in Hirschon (ed.), *Women and Property-Women as Property*, 1984, p.

[20] See also for this methodological suggestion Nora Skouteri-Didaskalou, *Anthropologika gia to ginaikeio zitima*, Politis, Athens, 1991 (2nd ed.), p. 65.

[21] Asdrachas, Spyros, *Oikonomia kai nootropies*, Athens, Ermis, 1988, p. i.

relationships defining the organization of unpaid care by relatives obscures other forms of social division, such as class and race, which play a dominant role in everyday reproductive work.[23] Thus caring is extended outside the domain of family and kin in paid work for families.

The aim of this section is not to set class in opposition to gender but to investigate experiences of caring inside the domain of family and kin in order to illuminate the way in which family relationships are structured by and structure gender in a specific socio-economic background.

> Class is defined in an essential aspect by the place and value it gives to the two sexes and to their socially constituted dispositions. This is why there are as many ways of realizing femininity as there are classes and class fractions, and the division of labour between the sexes takes quite different forms, both in practices and in representations, in the different social classes.[24]

Here we look at the specific economic and social structures within which the interviewees married. The arrangement of marriages for women of the poor was a parental strategy. The arranged marriages of Folegandrian women were decided by their parents and aimed at ensuring the return of young women to Folegandros and at safeguarding parental care during old age and illness. Arranged marriages were a means to maintain group cohesion and to restrict women's mobility.

In the Folegandrian case the form of migration (temporary or permanent), the care of parents in sickness or old age and the marriage cannot be separated from each other as they belong to the realm of family obligations and form part of the socio-economic system of the community. They constitute instances in which parents exercised their control with the purpose of achieving the most suitable arrangement for what they considered the welfare of the family. This involved two sets of responsibilities: the moral obligation of a daughter who had to stay on the island to take care of them and the management of her dowry in order to achieve a favourable marriage. These strategies have a gendered and a generational dimension. The question of marriage is intrinsically related to the form and timing of migration. It was parents who decided the timing of the return and the marriage of their daughters. The money

---

[22] Passerini, *Fascism*, p.

[23] Hilary Graham explores how the experiences of caring in paid domestic labour have constituted the social divisions class, gender and race. "The Concept of Caring in Feminist Research: The Case of Domestic Service", *Sociology*, vol. 25, no. 1, February 1991, p. 61-78.

accumulated in service was sent back to the parents in order that they decide the most favourable management of it: the purchase of land or a house, and in cases in which the amount of money did not allow such purchases, the purchase of furniture. The women had already bought what they called "dowry", consisting of household goods such as bedding, cutlery, crockery, towels and tablecloths in Athens. All the informants describe their return to the island as being their parents' decision, either so that they could look after their mothers because they were ill, or in order to get married. Eleni and Anastasia were withdrawn from service and returned to Folegandros to care for their mothers who fell ill:

> -Why did you come back to Folegandros?
> For my mother. She was in bed.
> [...]
> When my mother died I had to take care of my father. I nursed [*dadeva*] my father. [...] My poor father was in bed for one-two years and I was taking care of him. [Eleni]

> I left [service] and I came back to my house. My father told me [*mou minise*] to come back because my eldest sister got married and she was pregnant. She lived in the house down here [a house next to her parents' house which belongs to her daughter now]. [Anastasia]

Anastasia explains that her eldest sister lived on the island but when her husband became seriously ill she migrated to Athens to work in service in order to support her son.

> My mother was in bed for fourteen years and died in my hands.
> -You said that your father told you to come back, why?
> Because she [her sister] could not look after her. She was pregnant [*varemeni*]. She had the baby, and my father said, we are two old people left here alone; he was in the countryside [*exohiko*] he didn't know how to cook, to wash, to do anything. Eh, if there wasn't a person in the house, what else could be done, there wasn't anything else that could be done, was there? She [the other sister] didn't want to come back, she was young, she was in Athens.

One can glimpse in the above excerpt the economic and emotional politics of the family system. The moral obligation of daughters to look after their mothers and fathers and the gendered division of labour in the rural household; the choice between sisters which was made on financial considerations and related also to age. Anastasia as the youngest daughter was the last to be called back to the island. But as her elder sister

---

[24] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 107-8.

had already decided to get married and stay in Athens and refused to go back to the island, Anastasia had no other choice. The eldest daughter, who had not been in service before marriage [*anevgalti*], was the one initially chosen to stay in Folegandros, close to her parents. But her misfortune in her marriage (a sick husband) and a new-born child deprived her of her capacity to undertake parental care.

That's how Anastasia describes the workings of daughters' obligations:

> As long as they [parents] manage to live without help, they live alone. Later, one of the children will stay with the parents in order to look after them. It was me, because my eldest sister was here. The other was in Athens since she was young. She had left years ago. When she[the eldest daughter] got married and had the baby, my father saw that she could not support them anymore, because my mother was ill, confined to bed [xamo]. They needed a person in the house. And he *forced* me to come. She [the other sister in Athens] did not want to come. So I came. [...]. [emphasis mine] You have to take it as it is. [*Opos ta vreis tha ziseis, ti na kameis, anagastika*] What else can you do? You are forced to.

The fatalism of the above testimony arises from the impotence of young women regarding decisions about their own future. The division of labour in the family did not allow any space for individual decisions and when this division was violated due to death or to illness, the safety mechanisms to restore its functioning were based on gendered notions of caring. Thus, when Anastasia said that her parents forced her to go back to the island it was the internalization of the moral system of the community which required from daughters to be the carers for their elderly parents and dictated submission to parental decisions. Caring, as Beverly Skeggs argues, "is an attribute of the self, caring means to be the right sort of person".[25] The system of female migration in the Cycladic islands in the form of domestic service provided the means for the establishment of a new household in Folegandros and enabled the return to the island. This form of temporary migration was defined by the need of elderly parents to be taken care of and for that reason the return to the island was a decision taken by parents. Thus the system of care for the elders of the community by the family, as the core of its organization, was linked to this specific form of migration. Family was the basic unit that secured mutual aid. Also, caring was the extension of the serving capacities that women had acquired in domestic service, not only in terms of skills but also as an experience shaping a caring subjectivity and as a system of exchange. Caring

---

[25] Skeggs, *Constructions of Class...*, p. 67.

for elderly parents had an important economic dimension. For although the accumulation of dowry was the purpose of migration and the responsibility of women themselves, and not of parents, and thus it did not constitute a form of inheritance, yet caring for parents was repaid by inheritance.

Two of the interviewees inherited the parental house as a reward for their services. Like Anastasia from Ano Meria, Eva was repaid for her services to parents though inheritance.

> -Whose was this house?
> This was my parents' house and finally they gave it to me. My mother, because I served her [*tin eksipiretisa*], gave it to me. I will leave it to one of my daughters, the eldest. And she will make do [*as kamei kala*]. And I want, if I'll be in bed [*ean kano krevati*], not to be confined in bed [*kamo krevati*], to die on the spot [*bam kai kato pou lene*] because the bed is a torture, for the person who is ill but also for the one who serves him [*eksipiretaei*]. Because I served [*eksipiretisa*] two old people and I know. [Eva]

Provision for the social welfare of the elders of the community was based on the generational and gendered allocation of obligations, constituting a system of exchange through inheritance. The services offered by daughters were rewarded in the form of inheritance. This system implied that parents keep in reserve part of their property in order to secure their needs in old age.[26] Eva had four daughters, all of whom went into service. Initially, Eva had planned to keep the youngest daughter in Folegandros and not let her go to service.

> When I had her here she was 16-17 years old. I told her, "you should stay here, don't leave, stay here, you will marry a man from here and so on". And she said, "Why did you let the others go and not me?" So in order to avoid complaints I let her leave.

Although caring for parents could be seen as part of a transaction between the holders of rights in property (parents) and those who had interests in these rights (daughters), it is difficult to argue that these future anticipations were the determining factor for a daughter undertaking the care of her elderly parents. The transmission of property was a means through which the community reproduced itself and through which the elders of the community secured their care, yet, the gendered allocation of

---

[26] This arrangement is called *gerontomoiri* and it was one of the family strategies of communities in 17th century Naxos as well as in Serifos. Kalpourtzi, *Siggenikes sxeseis* p. 163; Eftyxia Liata, *I Serifos*

caring obligations indicates that caring for parents cannot be seen simply as an economic transaction defined by economic considerations. Serving was rewarded with inheritance but the role of women as carers was not produced by or through the system of transmission of property. Rather it was through the control of women, that is, the control of sexuality through the norm of chastity, the control of marital negotiations by parents, and their subordinate role in production that the social reproduction of the community was achieved. Care was offered to parents but it was not the expectation of an economic reward that determined the offer. Serving elderly parents was an obligation defined by the social organization of the community whose basic unit of production, consumption and mutual aid was the family. Because family members did not have equal access to decision making, looking after parents was determined by daughters' subordination to parental power.

Parents were usually cared for in their own houses, but there were cases in which mothers lived with their daughters. The interviewees who lost their husbands either lived with their daughters or very close to them, and were taken care of by them.

The perpetuation of this system of care was a reality which was accepted and welcomed, but not without ambivalence. Expressions such as "he did not age" (meaning he was not confined to bed) or "she is not worthy" (meaning she is not able to do things) indicate a negative perception of ageing and elderly people as well as the gendered dimension of ageing. Characterizing a woman as "not worthy" is to say that she is not able to offer any service and for that reason she looses her value in the family and community. Having experienced the strain produced by the dependence of elderly parents upon them, and the heavy load of work this created, the interviewees did wish not to become feeble and confined to bed. This wish serves to express their dissatisfaction with the work and confinement entailed by caring for others (husbands, parents, in-laws) without challenging the system itself. Eva has already shown us that she expects from her daughter to take care of her but at the same time she wished to die without lingering [*bam kai kato*]. The dialogue between Anastasia and Margarita is illustrative of this dissatisfaction but also of the divergence of perception concerning caring at different stages of a life time:

---

kata tin Tourkokratia [Serifos during Turkish rule], Idrima erevnas kai paideias tis emporikis trapezas tis ellados, Athens, 1987, p. 146.

Margarita. Kyra Anastasia, don't complain. He [Anastasia's husband] departed [died], he did not age [*gerasene*]. You might have ended up being alone but don't complain.
-When did your husband die?
Marg. He wasn't old, but he did not age [*gerase*]. Kyra Anastasia, keep silent because we need to think of these things before we enter our sixties.
Anastasia. Every night before I fall asleep I beg for that. Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, why don't you take me now? To leave this life, I am fed up with my life, I have gone through a lot, with the occupation, wars, this and that, I have gone through a lot, and I am bored of everything, I don't want to hear anything of that.
Margarita. You are fed up with life, I am fed up with *geramata* [old age].
Anastasia. *Geramata*. Yes.
Margarita. Not yours. I have felt the *geramata*. But I've seen what comes with it. Do you know how many people have departed [died] from there [her house]?
Anastasia. You are right.

The discussants operate at two different levels. Anastasia, whose house is almost attached to her daughter's, talks about the hardships of her life while Margarita is talking about the burden of taking care of elders. According to the system of inheritance in Ano Meria Margarita's husband inherited the parental house. While his parents were alive, Margarita's husband established a new household right next to the parental house. Although the newly wed couple was established in a separate building the households were united in financial terms and comprised a joint household. Margarita refers to this arrangement of the sharing a common budget between the two families as "one door, one wallet". The unification of households through patrilinear law and virilocality entailed the daughter-in law caring for the parents. Margarita served her-in laws, who were confined to bed, until they died. Now she walks three kilometers every afternoon to visit her mother who is helpless in bed, in order to take care of her. Although Anastasia refers to her caring for parents as "trouble", she is not in tune with Margarita in the discussion. Her needs in old age prevent identification with Margarita's worries about the present and past demands by in-laws and parents.

The interviewees' role as servants did not come to an end when they left paid employment in domestic service but was extended and performed for the parental family, and, as we shall see, for in-laws. The interviewees from Folegandros did not choose their future husbands. This decision lay in the realm of parental responsibility. The average age of marriage for the interviewees from Folegandros was 25. Late

marriage and an average of 11 years in domestic service indicate a pattern of migration in which service constituted a stage in the life-trajectory before marriage with the purpose of amassing a dowry. Although such was the case for the interviewees, there are strong indications that live-in service and other forms of service like day-work, working as stewards or laundresses, and as a wet-nurses were widely performed after marriage and not only in widowhood. Anastasia's sister, who was the one initially chosen to stay with her parents, went after her husband's illness to Athens with her son and worked as a live-in servant in the house of a priest. "I worked when I was married and unmarried". Eva worked in the bakery and baked the bread every Saturday for the village people. During the Second World War Anastasia moved with her husband to Athens while he was in the army. She worked as a live-in servant for the mother of her previous employer for two and a half years. Eleni worked as a stewardess from when she moved with her husband and children to Athens, while her husband was employed as an agricultural labourer in the fields of a Folegandrian landowner in Bojiati. Eirini worked as a cleaner for political prisoners during their exile in Folegandros during the dictatorship, as well as for the island's doctor. She was also in charge of the mess allowance during the Second World War. Wet nursing was a common occupation for married women who left their children with their mothers and mothers in-law and migrated. Thus service jobs were the predominant occupation for Folegandians after marriage. Additionally, all the interviewees referred to relatives and compatriots who worked as washer women in the houses in which they worked as servants. These were Folegandrians who had settled in Athens after marriage.

> -Did all girls want to leave?
> Yes, all, all. Old women as well, my daughter. Look, married women who gave birth left to go to breastfeed children. As wet nurses.
> -Even in your times?
> In my times, of course they went. Wet nurses, and all women worked, married and unmarried.
> -What happened to their children?
> They left them with their mothers in law and God knows...
> -I mean with the milk.
> They didn't leave when they were babies, they were eight months and then feeding from a bottle and the local milk. I didn't have milk but we had goats, I beg your pardon, and my husband milked them, the doctors told us that it should be a black goat and I put it in the feeding-bottle and my children drank it. Thank God this did not cause any damage to them. [Eva]

III. Decisions on Marriage and Dowries

All the marriages were arranged by parents, and it was mainly fathers who undertook marital negotiations, made the choice of husband and the agreement with the future husband. If guidance of moral conduct and advice were the responsibility of the mother and control lay with female neighbours, the choice of husband was undertaken by males: fathers, brothers, and in some cases important persons of the community. In the case of Eleni, A. must have been the landlord of the fields cultivated by her father. The landlord's influence, as we know from other sources, included his involvement in the marriages of his dependents.

> -What was your impression when you came to Folegandros after ten years in Athens?
> Here? Very bad. I got used to it, it was ten years that I had lived in Athens. And when I came here I didn't want to stay. I wanted to live again. But they fell on me and said, no, no, no, now you should stay, you have grown up, you should get married, establish your house, it is not right to leave, to go back. You shouldn't go back.
> -Did you want to go back to where you worked?
> Very much, they were waiting for me; they loved me. [...] I wanted to go back to Athens, because they [her employers] waited for me in the house [Eirini]

> -How did you meet your husband?
> My husband, I met him as soon as I came here, we were neighbours. His house was just a bit further down. He came to the house and he asked to marry me, we didn't say no, my father liked him because he did the same job, he was a good guy, etc. We had a lot of difficulties [*zoristikame*] to build this house because he did not have enough money and his father had died when he came back from the front, he was young, he didn't have money...[Anastasia]

> -How did you meet your husband? Had your parents chosen him?
> My parents. I was ready to leave and they didn't let me. No, you will not leave; you will stay.
> -Did you come often to Folegandros?
> I came twice to Folegandros, the second time I came and I got married. [...] I came to see my parents and then my husband, because his mother had died, he wanted to get married. When I saw the old man coming, I left, I left immediately. I left and I went to a lady who lived close, she was one of my people [*itane dikia mou ginaika*] and I used to talk to her, and I told her what happened, he came and I didn't know what would happen. And she said, Eva, don't say no. They are good people, industrious; they have everything. [Eva]

> -How did you meet your husband?

> When my mother died I had to take care of my father. I looked after [*dadeva*] my father, and my husband came and asked to marry me. I didn't want to because I was three years older than him. But he wanted. I was going to my cousin to pay a visit every evening [*veggeres*]. I went from 7:00 and stayed until 8.45. My poor father was in bed for one-two years and I took cafe of him. And my husband asked to marry me. The truth is that I didn't want to get married, but they all told me, "are you going to stay like that?" I told my father: "Father, x wants me but I don't". He said: "My child, he is a good guy, I will give you a few things, the house, so think about that". I had my father's opinion and of another man whose name was A. But he is dead now. And he said...
> -Why did you ask his opinion?
> Hold on. He said, he is a good guy. I got my father's opinion, then his and then my young brother's. But he was a friend of my brother. [*Mia porta I mia me tin alli*].
> -Did you want to stay in Athens?
> I did not want to marry at all. Because I loved someone else, I did not want anybody else. But he hadn't touched my hand, only from a distance. Only in the carnival [Apokries], here in a house at a ball. You got dressed and you went to dance. (Eleni)

Intermarriage was the dominant pattern for Folegandrians whether women returned to the island as we have seen in the previous cases, or settled in Athens. Although this was also the case for the internal migrants from other rural areas of Greece as well as for the refugee population, we have to explore the specificity of endogamy in these different communities and its link to the socio-economic organization of each community. For Folegandrian women their parents arranged their marriage, took the decision for their return to the island, and in most cases managed their earnings from service. For those who settled in Athens, their contact outside the Folegandrian community in Athens was minimal. Leisure time was exclusively spent with relatives or compatriots and the community's control was very tight. Marriages were arranged with Folegandrian men who were also migrants in the city.

Unfortunately, we do not have adequate information about the dowry system in Folegandros. The data about of the dowry system in Folegandros derives mainly from the interviews and, thus, due to the limited sample it is not possible to provide a model for the transmission of property on the island. Nonetheless, I hope that comparison with the findings of research that has been conducted in Greece in various geographical areas of Greece and in various periods, as well as theoretical and empirical work on the dowry in Europe and other parts of the world will enable the contextualization of the Folegandrian case and the validity of some conclusions. Moreover, oral testimonies

illuminate a grid of practices concerning the transmission of property, and the subjective understanding of social and economic activities, that do not allow the reduction of complex social phenomena to solely economic considerations. We saw, for example, as regards the inheritance of property as a reward for looking after parents that the outcome that is, inheritance, cannot be the sole explanation for the provision of care.

Although scholars have employed four typologies of the dowry system in the Aegean, there are numerous variations even on the same island, and the practice was often quite different from the norms defined by custom or law. In Foregandros, the dowry system in Ano Meria was different from that of Chora. In Chora women received a house as dowry, while in Ano Meria one of the sons, usually the youngest, inherited the parental house (ultimogeniture) as well as the land and/or rights of sharecropping. In Ano Meria residence is virilocal and the new household was economically united with the parental household even when the newly wed couple lived in a different building. Additionally, the son was under the control of his parents as he would inherit the parental house and land after their death. Yet, in practice, virilocal residence was a fairly usual phenomenon in Chora, even in cases where women were endowed with a house. The new couple moved to the homestead where the fields that belonged to the husband or those that were cultivated under the sharecropping system were located, as this enabled intense cultivation of the land. Besides, the need for more space when more children were born was a determining factor for the move from the wife's house to the husband's house as houses in Chora were one-room residences. In this case the son inherited land and not the proper parental house but the homestead. On the other hand, in Ano Meria there were cases in which, even when the husband was the only son of the family, the newly wed couple established a household close to the wife's parental house, while land and the parental house devolved to the son-in-law when there was no male heir.

The question of dowry for women and inheritance for men must be examined in relation to forms of socio-economic organization of the island. The types of property attached to men and women were linked to the system of agricultural production. Moreover, the needs of parents for care, the gender composition of the parental family, as well as death and illness, were important factors for the transmission of property and decisions about residence. The role domestic service as a form of female migration and the self-endowment of women in Folegandros through this migration were interrelated

with the system of agricultural production and constituted key factors in the reproduction of the community.

There are indications that property descended to women through the female line, that is from mother to daughter. As a rule, women in Folegandros were excluded from inheriting land, which was the most valued resource. Yet, some of them managed to buy land with the money they amassed as domestic servants. Two of the interviewees from Ano Meria bought land with their earnings while one interviewee inherited her father's land because the only son in the family died when he was eighteen-years old. As husbands inherited the parental house, women in Ano Meria bought land. In Chora the interviewees bought or were endowed with a house. Husbands usually had very little property, which could not guarantee self-sufficiency, and thus family income was supplemented by sharecropping. Apart from the husband of one interviewee, who worked as an agricultural labourer in Folegandros and in Bojiati (Attica) where the fields of a Folegandrian landowner were located, all the rest had a few small plots and were sharecroppers.

In a subsistence economy such as the peasants in Folegandros lived in and with the constant threat of debts setting at risk the survival of the family, land property brought by women in marriage was crucial for the new household as an extra income to sharecropping. Their land property indicates women's important role in production, but we should not conclude that this role was matched by egalitarianism in gender relations. Anthropologists who have worked in the Aegean islands and also in North western Portugal, have argued that women with property enjoyed an elevated position in marriage while suggest that these societies were not patriarchal and hierarchical as women's power was great.[27] Women's access to property changed during the life cycle, but we have to explore whether it affected their power in family relationships.

Property attached status to women in the sense that it enhanced their chances of marriage and their prospects for establishing a household that could guarantee the subsistence of the family. As marriages took place between individuals of equal status and wealth, women's property elevated their position in the marriage market. When Eirini arrived at the island with two trunks and 30,000 drachmas, she was very attractive as a marriage partner: "The wanted to marry us because we had a dowry.

They were arguing between them who is going to marry me. A lot of men fell on me to marry me. [...] I had two trunks, two trunks I had. The one who married me wanted to carry them. He didn't, somebody else carried them and my husband told them, 'you will be left with nothing. I will marry her, not you. The trunks are so heavy, full'". Yet her marriage had already been arranged by her father, just as her withdrawal from service and her return to the island had been decided by her father. Thus, access to resources does not immediately entail access to decision making.

The other important dimension in the question of women's property involves the form of control women had over their property and over the product of their labour. Folegandrian women had important control over their earnings from service in the sense that the money belonged to them and was not distributed to the family, as we shall see happened with refugees and other internal migrants. In most cases fathers managed their earnings and took decisions about the purchases.

All the interviewees provided themselves with what they called a "dowry", which consisted of movables. The provision of clothing, bedding and cutlery was women's obligation in marriage. These items were bought in Athens by the women themselves, and were brought with them to the island in trunks. In Ano Meria, the furnishing of the house was the woman's contribution when she moved to the husband's house. In Chora both the furniture and the house were to be provided by the bride. Eva gave the money she earned to her father who bought a chest, a mirror, a sofa from Paros, and chairs. Additionally, he bought her a one-room house in Chora. Anna sent her earnings from service to her father who bought her a piece of land. Margarita bought two pieces of land and bedding while her parents bought her furniture. Eirini amassed 32,000 which she kept in the savings bank. Her father bought her a house with this money. Parents did not managed the earnings of their daughters in all cases. Anastasia, who amassed 13,000 drachmas, did not put her money in the bank but kept it at the house of her employers. Her dowry consisted of a trunk with fabric, pillows, linen, cups, and glasses. She also bought the furniture for the house she and her husband built: the bed, the sofa, and the chairs. Her sister, who had stayed in Folegandros, did not have the money to buy the household equipment and neither could her parents provide her with money to buy it so she took from her parents' house all

---

[27] For the Aegean islands see Kalpourtzi, *Siggenikes sxeseis*, p. 80-4; for Portugal, Joao de Pina-Cabral, "Female Power and the inequality of wealth and motherhood in Northwestern Portugal", in

that she needed: "the best things that were in the house", as Anastasia says. Anastasia's dowry was not enough to buy land. She inherited her father's land as her brother, had died and her sisters remained in Athens, while her husband had two small pieces of land. They also had taken *misiarika* [fields under the system of sharecropping].

As we have seen the woman's contribution to the new household was substantial. When land was brought in marriage the contribution had repercussions on the status of women both in material terms but also regarding their power in marriage, especially when they married men with less property (hypogamy). Margarita's mother who bought three plots from her earnings in service, was married to a man who had less property. Margarita remembers that her mother used to despise her father for having less property: "What did you have? You had nothing". Margarita adds that this was not right.

It is likely that women who settled permanently in Athens were excluded from inheritance and that they used their dowry for the establishment of the new household in Athens. Moreover, as we have already seen, inheritance was linked to taking care of ageing parents, thus women who chose to settle in Athens did not look after parents. The sisters and relatives of the interviewees who settled in Athens married Folegandrian men. A large proportion of men who migrated and settled in Athens were bakery workers and masons. Eva's sister settled in Athens after her marriage:

> She died. She had six children. The father worked in a bakery, what could a loaf of bread do for them? Only a child survived.

The interviewees from Folegandros returned to the island following their parents' decision, either because the parents had already found them a husband or in order to take care of a sick parent. These two decisions were intertwined because the need for a daughter to take care of parents in old age or in case of sickness led to marriage and the establishment of the new household on the island and thus permanent settlement. Neolocal residence was the pattern of settlement after marriage for Folegandrian women. The location of the fields cultivated by the husbands under the sharecropping system defined in many cases the residence of the new couple. Although the interviewees had smaller families than their parents, they also sought larger houses. Eva's father had bought a house for her. Because it was impossible to live in a one-room house she moved to Petousis where her husband had an *eksohiko*, a house that

---

Women and Property, pp. 75-91.

peasants moved into during the agricultural high season. Eirini also moved to Livadi where her husband's cultivated fields were located. Livadi was a settlement close to Karavostasis in which eight families lived. Thus although in Chora women owned a house, residence was defined by the needs of the family such as proximity to the fields as well as space.

IV. Perceptions of Love

The creation of a serving subjectivity and the internalization of female inferiority explains why women accepted a marital arrangement of which the base was the need for the husband to acquire a wife in order to serve his parents and himself after the death of his mother. We shall see that for refugee and other migrant women who were disadvantaged in the marriage market due to the lack of dowry, a marriage was arranged in order to take care of the husband's parents. Eva's husband approached her parents with an explicit request for a wife to take care of himself and his father because his mother had died. When Eva visited her parents they had already chosen her husband: "In those times children listened to their parents".

Submissiveness to parental decisions was related to a deep-rooted belief in female inferiority. There are plenty of anecdotes and sayings concerning the birth of children in many areas of Greece which convey a hierarchical distinction between the sexes and the inferiority of girls. "The good mother's first child be a girl" in order to look after her young siblings. But in Cephallonia the same saying is completed with the following phrase: "and be dead". Similarly in Athens during the Otto rule: "Lucky you, you married her off only with half a meter [*mia pihi*] of cloth", meaning that the baby girl died and parents were relieved from the burden of endowing her. There are also names given to girls in order to stop the birth of more girls, such as Stamata, Arsinoi, Stavroula.[28]

The interviewees from Folegandros share the negative identity attached to women and reproduce it in their everyday speech.

> He has two children and one daughter. [Eva]
>
> -How many children do you have?
> None. This daughter that appeared now. This girl I have. [Anastasia]

---

[28] All the above quotations in Dimitris Oikonomidis, "The status of women in popular customs", *Deltion Ellinikis Laografikis Etaireias*, vol. 23, Athens 1972.

> My husband was the only child. He has a sister. [Anastasia]

These statements are typical of many areas of Greece, and illustrate the prejudice against girls according to which girls do not count as children and consequently as equal human beings. Through the trivial verbal reproduction of female inferiority, negative female identity reproduces itself and becomes a fate, taking the form of the natural order.

In a society in which the majority of the population lived at subsistence level and it was very easy to slip under the poverty line, industriousness was the most valued quality of husbands. Having experienced hardship during childhood, the interviewees relied on hard labour as the only means to escape poverty. Yet, poverty is not a universal category but varies according to the way it is perceived and lived by communities and individuals.

> There was a lot of poverty, misery. We had neither bread nor oil. Nothing. We put some drops of oil on bread and we spread it to go everywhere. And instead of sugar we put salt. [Eirini]

As economic self-sufficiency was an unattainable dream and a constant struggle, the choice of the husband was made with the aim of eliminating the threat of poverty. Industriousness was the only guarantee for future welfare. Endogamy offered a minimal security for an unpredictable future as the circulation of information in the community and face-to-face relationships minimized the risk of an inappropriate husband who could expose his wife to a precarious future and draw the whole family into destitution. "I didn't want to marry in Athens because I thought if he turns out to be a womanizer, or gambler or a tramp, where I would end up down there? On the other hand, I thought that here in Folegandros I would know whom I was going to marry, if he is good or not."

> They [parents] told me he is good, very good, very industrious, so I decided [to marry him]. [...] I asked, is this man about whom tell me that he wants me good? My brothers told me that he is the only one. The best, the most industrious, the best. [Eirini]

> He was very industrious; we had stuff in the house. Our oil, our own bread, milk, cheese, we had all these things because he was a tidy man. [Eva]

Uncertainty about the future and the precariousness of an economy of subsistence created a strong work ethic, which involved the belief that only though hard personal labour could one combat poverty. Folegandian women do not show any bitterness at not having had an education and they did not aspire for their children to improve their lives thought education. Although they had fewer children than their mothers and they used contraception, they reproduce a fatalistic attitude towards their financially restricted lives and a contempt for luxury, life in the city, young people' s sexual relationships and social advancement.

> He [her son] has his own business. Marble. But he works very hard. Can he go on working so hard? Now, pardon me, but you young women you want things as you like, but you must take into account the man you marry. Because in order to make money... only the marble he carries is enough. But we want plushy things, glamour, we want a lot. How did we manage in those years with so little? How did we manage, my daughter, and there was a time that my kids were naked, because we did not have water. I don't know if they have told you these things. We didn't have washing machines and the luxuries that they've got now.[Eva]

> Now they have built good houses. In those days there weren't even toilets. They had a pit in front of the door, and they call it *kiti*. And they had the chicken in the house and there was neither a bad stink nor diseases. Now they all have marble and they howl like jackals. [...] We had the Lord's grace those days. Now everything is cursed. We half boiled the meet and we put it in the safe and it didn't go bad. [A Folegandrian from Chora]

Yet, the strains of responsibility and obligations, and of parental control over their lives, are encapsulated in the interviewees' own words. Hard work did not lead to a more comfortable life in old age. Limited resources and the meagre pensions of peasants entailed fierce restriction of basic needs such as the consumption of food:

> Gone are youth and beauty. If only youth was twice but it is not even once. [Eleni]

> Now it is difficult to live. I get 31,000 for my pension. What can you pay with this money, the electricity, the phone? [...] I prefer to starve than ask money from my children. I will eat bread and olives. Why should I buy meat? It is not obligatory, is it? My mother used to say that the belly hasn't got windows, meaning that whatever you eat nobody can see it. Of course, you need to have a proper dress to put on to go to the church. But for the every day a shift is enough.

Their experience in service shaped an identity of difference from that of ladies, and led to the naturalization of categories of social difference. A lady's was a social position defined by contrast to a servant's: The disidentification, which is expressed through the statement "I was not a lady", is complemented by the next statement "now they want servants". What these statements suggest is an acceptance and essentialization of the categories of social difference such as lady and servant through the negative and condescending gaze directed at those who dare to claim a position to which they are not entitled. Distancing themselves from those who dare to cross the borders of social inequality and step to the other identity which is symbolically codified as keeping servants, these women deprive themselves of what is already denied to them: social recognition and advancement, leisure, luxury, and abundance. "Not being forced to work" but always being available to offer their services without being asked ("working like a slave") reveals above all the process through which the individual *performs* and appropriates schemes of perception and readjusts herself to social divisions. Knowing one's place in the world encompassed the acceptance of a work ethic by which the subject performed a subordinate role reproducing and naturalizing through this performance the mental and social structures of the world.

> I worked hard. I worked like a slave. Somebody told me, you were a hero that's how you made ends meet. Yes, I was a hero. My husband was tired [*ipedevountan*], could I sit like a lady? *I was not a lady*. Not that he forced me to work, he never said, "you will do this". No no. Mercy. I don't lie. I couldn't see him working so hard, struggling, and me just looking at him. It' s not possible. It was not. Now they want servants. Yes.
> [...]
> To tell you the truth, the cook was not quite alone. You would do something of everything. You couldn't sit and watch the other do the chores and you, who have put the food on the fire, to sit and not help her. They had lounges, with old furniture with carvings, with this and that. These were not easy tasks. [Eva]

The similarity of Eva's attitude to domestic service and to work within marriage is illuminating of the shaping of a work ethic that was grounded in the position of the subject in the service of others. Being available is an attribute of the self, it is to be the right sort of person. To conform to this subject position is a prerequisite for labour as well as marital relationships, and thus for the reproduction of the community and of the family and the social order. Keeping servants is despised because it devalues women's role as carers while a "heroic" attitude to work hard and offer the self in the service of

others. The dichotomy between lady and servant suggests that the way gender is lived varies for different social backgrounds, and shows that what is perceived as the appropriate manner of being and acting as a woman for one class is different for another. Denying or challenging the role of the servant sets at risk the status of women in the rural household and the system of social organization which rests on the family as the central unit of the community.

Going back to the issue of relationships between spouses what appears as egalitarianism in this rural community it is grounded in women's acceptance and performance of a serving subjectivity and thus of their social subordination. "Working like a slave" was not liberating. Yet, we should not neglect that women's access to property enabled them to secure their care in old age through the negotiation of offers and rewards.

The gendered dimension of the social subordination of the Folegandrian interviewees can also be illustrated by what they say about eating arrangements. Eating arrangements reveal the system of social organization of a community and the gendered and generational power relations in the family. The patriarchal organization of the Folegandrian community requires the father to be served first, the boys after, later the girls and the mother last. Agricultural production was based on family labour with the father being in charge of its organization. Decision-making lay with the father and involved the hierarchical distribution of resources, and his privileged position in consumption as well as in leisure. In an economic system in which the family was the core of production the exploitation of children's labour was a prerequisite for the functioning of the family economy. Although in the following quotation the children considered are the male children, girls also contributed to family labour, usually by tending the animals.

> My husband went to bed at eight o'clock. The doors were locked and the children were inside sleeping. He was tired, my dear, all day working, it was hard labour, he couldn't stay awake longer. He woke up before dawn. But now in the summer, because we had to thresh and we had the threshing floor at the *katoikia* we stayed there. And he always dragged himself along [*sernountan* always *mprosta*] as a father and ate. As soon as he ate, he left the table and went to the other room to sleep. And before the children finished eating he was up. I was [*ton evana bros*] scolding him and I said look, "only you had lunch and got a rest The children need a rest as well. Let them finish their food and get a rest". "No", he said, "we've got to work".

V. Marriage Patterns of the Refugee Population and Migrants from Continental Greece

Contrary to the Folegandrian pattern of migration, which took the form of domestic service and whose aim was the accumulation of dowry, for the rest of the rural as well as for the refugee population domestic service had a completely different function in the family economy. Daughters' earnings were necessary for the survival of the family and the wages of daughters were either consumed immediately by the family or the large sum that women accumulated in service was completely claimed and distributed according to the current needs of the family. In most cases the money was given directly to male siblings and this arrangement constituted one of the most profound aspects of gender inequality in the family. The management of daughters' earnings varies between the rural and the urban population. For the working classes of the urban population, and especially for refugees, the enormous difficulties of new settlement in Athens and the precariousness of jobs due to an unstable labour market entailed an immediate need for cash. Sending a daughter into service or factory work aimed immediately at a direct contribution to the family budget and not solely with the relief of the family from overcrowding or from the expenses that a child entailed. All the interviewees either directly gave their earnings to their parents or mothers collected their daughters' wages directly from the employers.

The timing of marriage depended on the capacity of other siblings to work in order to compensate for the lack of earnings that the marriage of a daughter entailed, as well as on the immediate needs of the family for cash.

Arranged marriage was also the case for the refugee population. Ioanna had stayed in service for eighteen years as a foster child [*psychocori*]. Her employers had promised her parents to marry her off and give her a dowry. When she reached twenty-five her parents worried that there had not been any attempt on the employers' part to arrange a marriage for Ioanna as they had promised. Thus, her father arranged her marriage and went to her employers to announce it. Ioanna did not know her fiancée. She lived with her in-laws while she was engaged.

> -Did you know him?
> No, not at all. [...] My father took me and I went to their house and they engaged me. These people originated from the depths of Asia Minor. My father and mother-in law spoke Turkish.

Fathers arranged the marriages of their daughters and in some cases the announcement was a shocking experience as women were introduced to their "fiancée" without knowing about the arrangement and without having ever seen him before in their lives.

> -How did you get married?
> He was a friend of my father. It was Saint John's day. I was in the house and I thought that my father might invite someone, a relative. And I saw four or five people coming, all his friends. They were tipsy [*sto tsakir* kefi]. They had been drinking wine. I was sitting there and when I saw them I said to myself, oh my God.
> -Did you realize what was happening?
> Do you know what I heard? I heard one saying, my [future] husband. He says to a friend of his. 'You will go and look at the toilet. And if you find it clean, you will touch your ear. If it smells you will hold your nose'. Listen, my child, men's peculiarities...
> -Did you like him?
> But everything was...
> -He was much older...
> Yes, fifteen, no fourteen, years older than me. But I didn't want to go against my father's will.

The subordinate position of daughters in the marriage bargain here takes the extreme form of a total disregard of their desires and opinion about their own marriage. Bringing a daughter before her future husband without any previous discussion indicates a failure to recognize the other as an individual. The lack of conflict over parental decisions shows that the internalisation of the subjection of daughters' needs to parental decisions was total. The father's verdict had the force of law and subordination to his will was not achieved through coercion, but it was based on the deep-seated knowledge of their inferiority as women.

As in Ioanna's case, Eleftheria had no idea about the arrangement between her father and the future husband.

> I saw three men in the room, and a young guy, and my father says, 'is it you, Eleftheritsa?' And I say, 'yes, dad'. And my husband now turns his head. My father says 'come here, I want to introduce you. Here is your fiancée'. Can you believe it? Archaic things. I stood there like a pillar of salt. I didn't know what to say. I didn't speak, my husband laughed. Nicos knew me, but I didn't know him.
> -Was he living in the same neighbourhood?
> No, he lived in Nea Smyrni, but the matchmaking [*proxenio*] had been done by my mother and his aunt. He had seen me one-two times, but I didn't know anything. And when my father said that, I went out to the yard, outside the kitchen, and burst into tears. And there was my sister, Aggelina, whom I love very much and I consider as my mother. And I

said, 'Aggelina, why did dad engage me, am I a bad girl and he engaged me. I am a bad kid and he engaged me?'
-How old were you?
Sixteen...

The deep-rooted feeling of inferiority is illustrated by the child-like behaviour of Eleftheria. In the narrative she positions herself as a child while her father calls her little although she is sixteen years old and has worked for six years as a servant and as a factory worker. Eleftheria was sent into domestic service at the age of ten. After Aggelina kidnapped her from her employer, she was coerced to go again into service even though she tried to resist by hiding from her parents. Later her mother forced her to leave her employers, as she needed the money that she had accumulated in service. Eleftheria had been an item of exchange until the moment of the engagement. Through these transactions, in which a child was given in exchange for money or simply from relieving the family from the costs of maintenance and the space she occupied, a child understood herself as a burden. In this way, one's existence was felt to be undesirable to one's parents and to be something to be disposed of to strangers. The internalization of being a burden to the family created feelings of guilt about her own existence. The engagement was thus seen as another attempt to dispose of her and the knowledge of being undesirable generated a feeling of guilt at having done something wrong, namely, the single fault of existing. "As a child I felt very inferior", Eleftheria says. The engagement was seen as punishment.

The authority of older women in the management and disposition of girls was grounded on their responsibilities in the household. Aggeliki was an orphan child from Asia Minor and moved to Crete after four years in service to live with the sister of her mother. She was twelve years old when the mother of her future husband visited Aggeliki's aunt to ask whether she allowed him to marry Aggeliki:

> They came with his mother to my aunt's house to talk about me. I was upstairs. It was evening. I heard everything they said. My aunt said "yes" immediately. Then they called me. I didn't want to go out because I had heard everything. My aunt came upstairs and I went with my face down. His mother said: My child, we came for you. My son wants to marry you. When you grow up he will marry you, since we knew your father. I told her that he should marry my sister because she is older. The man said I don't want your sister. I want you. [...] In the morning my aunt started to put pressure on me. I was not talking. I was very sad and cried. [...] When the big brother got married they wanted me. I didn't want to go because I was ashamed. Finally, they put me in a white dress with a bow and we went to the village where the

> marriage took place. After the marriage Alexandra said, you are not coming back to the village. You are staying here. I was shocked.

Economic calculation lay behind the aunt's decision to engage Aggeliki at the age of twelve and to send her to the in-laws, relieving the family from an economic burden, however minimal. Aggeliki's aunt treated her differently from the rest of the family, she did not allow her to eat the same food. In the marriage negotiation, she was treated as an object. As we have already seen in the procedure of sending a daughter to service, children were not informed about their removal from their family. Their sex defined them as inferior beings and the internalization of inferiority did not allow any resistance to family decisions.

The procedure of match-making was in most cases undertaken by women although in exceptional cases a man acted as a mediator between the candidate husband and the girl's fathers. A relative of the future husband approached the mother or the father of the girl and the negotiation took place initially between the matchmaker and the parents without the daughter being aware of it. Usually the future husband had previously announced his will to get married and had made explicit his needs concerning the attributes that a suitable wife should possess. Cleanliness, submissiveness and the serving capacities of women again are prominent as prerequisites in the choice of a wife. But, as we saw in Ioanna's case verbal reassurance was not adequate; the husband had to witness himself whether the girl met his standards and to evaluate the truth of information. In Eleftheria's case, her husband had watched her whitewashing the house and this played an important role in his decision to choose Eleftheria as his wife. In many cases the care of old parents determined the decision for and timing of marriage. The availability of the woman to serve in-laws was on the one hand a condition, and on the other hand diminished the man's expectations of a dowry.

> The match-maker, who was the *koumbara* as well, knew me, my family, she knew that my mother and father were neat people, she knew that we were submissive children, that we were well behaved [*agogi*]. And Nicos had his father, who had divorced his mother, and his mother was on a second marriage and Nicos lived with his surrogate father. And he wanted to get married in order to take care of his father.

Caring for elderly parents was an important factor in the decision to marry. But it was also the needs of a son whose elderly mother could no longer serve his needs that determined the search for a wife. While Ioanna was engaged, she served her in-laws for

two years. Yet, the conflict between a bride and the mother-in law and the feeling of been exploited led Ioanna to break the engagement:

> He was a very good guy and used to tell me, Ioanna, don't fight [*parexigeis*] with my mother, she will die and we will be alive. I don't know what happened. One day I waited for him to come, and he didn't turn up. It was raining. And he stayed home because he didn't want to spoil his clothes in the mud and put his mother afterwards to clean them. In the meantime, he demanded from me...my God... to do all the house from top to bottom, to take out his clothes from the wardrobe, to dust them, to iron, so that Yannis, the only son, would find them clean and tidy. And I said, if Yannis did not appreciate this and he did not want to put his mother to trouble, although this was my job, I couldn't go on with this engagement.

The skills that women had acquired in service were determining factors in the choice of a wife. Evdoksia married at the age of 39 by arrangement made through a matchmaker to a man who had a restaurant and whose wife had died. She worked in her husbands' restaurant cooking, cleaning and keeping a hencoop and rabbits, exactly the work she had done in domestic service.

Serving the future husband's parents was a major issue in marital negotiations and an explicit demand on the male part. Moral conduct and the practical skills women acquired in service were also important.

> -And they [parents] didn't say anything to you...
> Nothing at all... They said, 'here is your fiancée', he said [her father]. If my husband was here now, he would confirm it. And if you ask Vaggelitsa, she will tell you the same, because my husband was a cousin of hers. I didn't talk, I only left and cried. And afterwards, my dad called me to say good bye. I didn't go out to, I don't remember well, I think I said goodbye from a distance. And finally my mother told my father, 'come to see your daughter, she is crying'. And my father said, 'come here Eleftheria, he used to call me Eleftheritsa. Eleftheritsa, come here'. And I went. 'Why are you crying?' he asked. I said, 'dad, why did you engage me, was I a bad kid so you did it. What did I do and you engaged me?' And he said, 'I did not engage you because you were a bad kid, I did it because you are a very good kid', he said. 'But, my girl, I have four daughters to marry off; another three girls after you. I marry you off, because I am poor. And you are a beautiful girl, and young, and I can give you without a house. If you grow up, you will need a house and dowry and I don't have these to give. I marry you off little, in order not to give a dowry'. What a reasoning! Archaic things! I might have calmed after that. And after fifteen-twenty days it was my father's name day, Agios Antonis, it was winter, November. And Nicos would come formally.
> -Had you seen him again in between?
> No, he would come after twenty days as groom.

> [...] And the matchmaker came and she said, 'what are you doing here?' And my mother said, 'my sister in law brought a chicken', I don't remember well. And she said, 'if you do such a preparation, I will tell Nicos to bring the wedding rings to finish off. To engage them'. [...] And Nicos comes and they engage us. That evening. And I froze in my tracks.

The cold calculation on the part of Eleftheria's father rests not only on his total control over the management of the earnings of dependent members of the family but also in the exercise of power over their bodies and selves. It is significant to stress that the management of bodies as well as earnings was gendered, as male children were often benefited from the redistribution of resources. And although all children had to pay for their existence, female children were treated like an undesirable possession that had to be given away through marriage before losing its use value as labour power and as a sexual object, sons were never treated this way. This double use of females for labour, reproduction and sexual pleasure is encompassed in the trading of youth, beauty, and the ability to serve by Eleftheria's father in the marriage negotiations. The lack of a dowry put women in an extremely disadvantaged position, their only possessions that could be traded in marital negotiations were youth, beauty, and serving skills.

> And after they engaged us, the 4th of December, they didn't let us go out. He came to my house to see me, and then he left, and this went on. Now I had started slowly slowly to like him. After this had happened. And we crossed the road and he accompanied me to my sister's. And there were some steps and he put me under the steps and kissed me.
> -Had you fallen in love before?
> No never, and he kissed me on the cheek, then he cuddled me. And I always shrunk back; I was ashamed.

Parental exploitation of their daughters' earnings, labour and skills rested upon the perception of female children as inferior beings, but it also constructed the subordination of girls. Depriving them of their earnings and using their services was a right based on patriarchal power. It was not only the power of the father that determined female subordination but a brotherhood between males (the father, the brother, the husband) who objectified women and subjected them to their needs. A self in the service of others was produced by gender ideology held by the family and community, practiced in domestic service and perpetuated in the family. Other females, through bonds of kinship, exercised this ideology and used the services of other females for their benefit.

Panajota's story allows us to see the full dimension of the gendering of service and the sadness of a self subjected to the needs of others. The measure of the elimination of the self here leads through religious doctrine to self-negation. When Panajiota left domestic service after twenty years and returned to her parental house she was treated as a burden to the family. Her depiction of herself sitting and washing in a corner of the house conveys a claustrophobic feeling. The lump sum she had gathered from twenty years of labour was not considered hers. It was taken away by her brother and she became the servant of the household which consisted of her father, her brother, his wife and their five children. Marriage was undesirable as it would deprive the family of Panajiota's services and would also entail the financial strain of endowment, which would in reality be self-endowment.

> I came here. Sad and silent I was [*Mavro ki allalo pou imouna*]. My father didn't quite know, he thought, where she [Panajiota] was it was better. My sister-in law told him: 'Father, she wants marriage and dowry. How are we going to make it with her demands: marriage and dowry'..
> -In the house where you worked didn't you amass a dowry? Didn't they give money to your father?
> The clothes we wore, we had nothing more. We were not afraid of thieves. Giorgis [her brother] took the money from the bank. I made him my proxy. Did you see the money? I didn't. My brother, I made him my proxy and he went and took it.
> -How much money was it?
> Sixty five thousand. For those times a lot of money [*xrisa lefta tote*].
> -You could have bought a house.
> I could have bought half of Athens. I made my brother my proxy. Do you see a drachma? A penny? I saw the same myself.
> [...] I came to my father. My sister-in-law told him, father, what are we going to do with her? She wants marriage and dowry. And she had five children whom I took care of [*koumantariza*]. It was Saint Spyridon's day. I washed the dishes, in the evening, as I used [mathimeni] to do down in the corner, we didn't have sinks. I put [sigirao] the kids to sleep, now who knows what the sister-in-law had told my father. And as soon I finished, I went and sat in the corner. And my father stands up and grabs me, Aggggghh, to strangle me. He hurt me and I took his hand away and he turns and he puts it in my eyes. The father. 'You said that I had the man and the dowry'. He tried to strangle me. In the morning he shouted, Panajiota. My sister-in-law name was called Panajiota too. Yes, my dear father, [*pateraki mou*]. The unlucky [*mavro*], I killed it in the evening and now it calls me my dear father [*pateraki mou*].
> -Why did he do that?
> Because she told him that I was asking for marriage and a dowry. How could he find the dowry and the marriage, and the man? He was satisfied that he had me there. I should have come back and brought

> bastards [*moulika*] with me. No? But I came here with my face clear like a mirror and I honoured him. *Ai sto kalo.* A piece of wood fell and cut my leg. As it fell, it broke the bone. Ohh. My brother comes, they were poor then, to take me to the doctor. Tie it [Panajiota] behind the mule. For me. My father. I suffered from strangers I suffered from my father too. Afterwards my father felt what kind of person I was. Because she left with her husband, they went to Akrata with my brother to buy oil. And he saw the house, the children, the order, better than... 'eh, my child, I didn't know all this, and I punished you. You can feel contempt [moutzoneis] for the best woman here in the village, you are worthy, you do this and that'. Then my husband came here, his wife had died and her relatives brought him here. And he married me. 'Have you got anything more than the things you wear?' I hadn't, I was married like that. And she didn't want to give me a pair of pillows to put on the wedding bed. 'Gianni, you didn't bring the pillows back to me', she said. 'You will enjoy them in black'. Do you hear that? Thanks God. God forgive them. All these things I went through. And do you know what I said? Jesus Christ went through so much, I can do the same. I can do the same. Thanks God, I found a poor man, I saw a bright day. From then on it was all black and dark. My little brother loved me but he didn't cope. That's it. The beautiful youth! No? Well, cheers, forgive me for what I said.

When she returned to the parental house after twenty years in service Panajiota's possessions consisted of money, serving skills and honour. Her money was immediately taken from her, and what remained were the other two properties, honour and serving skills, again to be offered to the family. Panajota is proud of having preserved her chastity after the attack by her employer, it is a valuable possession that may enhance her prospects for marriage but also a gift that is offered to her father and attaches honour to the family. Panajiota has "honoured" her father; had she lost her virginity, the family, and especially its male members would have lost their face in the community. "Coming back with bastards" would be an act against her father. Thus, virginity is one more aspect of the interdependence of family members and the control of women's bodies. Finally, her serving skills were exploited by the parental family and she became the servant of the family. Her marriage was a threat to the family as its members would be deprived of her services, while providing her with a dowry would mean that she would receive compensation for the money that had been taken from her. Submission to the needs of the family is fully accepted and performed by Panajiota and all her contributions to the family derive from an understanding of the self devoted to the service of others, and devoid of any self-interest or individualistic behaviour. This subject position is the outcome of relations of power both within the family and in

domestic service, in which the value of women was measured by the service to others. It is through her father's acknowledgement of the role of Panajiota as a servant that her self- esteem is achieved.

The role of religion is crucial in the shaping of Panajiota's subjectivity. Her narrative draws upon the biographies of saints both in its form and in its content. She uses the word *vios* for her life-story: "My bios cannot be narrated" [*o vios mou einai adiigitos. Den diigietai*] a term used for the life-stories of saints. Her sufferings are presented as trials sent by God and are endured because they are counterpoised to the sufferings of Jesus: "And do you know what I said? Jesus Christ went through so much, I can do the same. I can do the same". This phrase is a leit-motif in Panajiota's interview when she refers to her experience in domestic service as well as in her own family. For a child completely abandoned for twenty years to a cruel employer and then exploited by her family, religion and specifically the life of Jesus, provide not only a refuge but a story and a model through which Panajiota lived her own life. Jesus was a figure to identify with, and, through identification, enduring suffer became a mode of existing and handling pain. The lack of recognition of her sacrifices for the family can be seen as a repetition of Jesus' unrecognized service to mankind. Her identification with Jesus can also explain why Panajiota drove herself to the limits of self-sacrifice and silently accepted the humiliations that her brother and father inflicted upon her.

Religious faith was much more than a refuge, it was a whole world view.[29] The stories of the New Testament and particularly the life of Jesus was a model that shaped the way of living, and "provided a prototypes for men's imagination".[30] Ricoeur attributes to Saint Paul one of the modalities of Chirtian hermeunutics according to which one interprets her own existence in the light of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. Endurance of suffering is the core of this identification which is also found in the advice to servants drawing from Saint Paul's preach.[31] Panajiota viewed her life in service as a repetition of the life of Jesus: " I said to my self, Jesus went through all this suffering, I can do the same". We can see in the interpretation of the self, the validity of Christian hermeunutics which is based on the "correspondance between the Christ-

---

[29] Ricoeur, *Essays*, p. 44.

[30] Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales, Penguin Books, New York, 1978 (2nd ed.), p. 52.

[31] Dionisios Farazoulis, *I xristianiki oikogeneia* [The Christian Family], Zoi, Athens 1930, pp. 296-332.

event and the inner-man".[32] Enduring suffering and particularly unjust suffering is the quintessential meaning of existence in the Judeo-Cristian tradition. And the suffering servant a great historical archetype. The ultimate from of test is the denial of life, that is, to become a martyr. In two testimonies which use the model of enduring suffering and in which the life is reconstructed as a saint's life, service and self-sacrifice are what relate their existence to the life of Jesus.

The end of the interview and her irony during the interview take us back to the role of laughter in the handling of identity. Panajiota uses a peculiar idiom of which basic component is irony and self-irony. Both are tropes that relate to modes of experiencing one's own past. At the end of her interview she returns to the motif of Jesus' life as a guide to her life: "Jesus went through so much, I can do the same. I can do the same. *I was stupid.* I said Jesus Christ went through so much, I can do the same". Self-irony expresses Panajiota's final disidentification with Jesus as well as from her own past and self. In this critical recapitulation of Panjiota's life, subjectivity shows itself as an arena of conflict, a constantly moving ground in which conflicting memories of the self coexist. Self-irony does not simply serve to create a distance from oneself in order to review critically one's own past. Self-irony is also a mechanism of release that makes it possible to talk about extremely painful and embarrassing experiences. In contrast to the refugees, who narrate their life-story as a drama, which is a narrative already available and a space of collective memory which connects individual suffering with collective suffering, self-irony appears a more "personal" space, in which isolated and individual pain can be handled. Panajiota's deep attachment and faith to religion doctrine as a mode of leading one's life has fallen apart. Irony is the only possible way to narrate failure, in the sense of a complete break with the past which entails a self that does not exist anymore, from the vantage point of the present. In this way self-irony registers a conflict within subjectivity.

When Galini went to Athens as a servant, a young man lived under the same roof and ran the errands for her employer. He originated from a neighbouring village to Galini's, and from a poor peasant family. Having no money to continue his studies at the university, Galini's employer asked him to do the errands in order to pay for his boarding. When Galini arrived, he started flirting with her:

---

[32] Ibid., pp. 52-4.

> We saw each other in the house and he was all compliments [*olo penies kai kako*]. For me.
> -Didn't you like him?
> Not that I didn't like him. I was ashamed. It was enough to think of his position and his kindness. [...]

Shame here arises out of a belief of being inferior. The feeling of inferiority is engrafted in uneasiness with one's body and language. Her timidity and embarrassment spring from the recognition of being deprived of the material or cultural capital that would enable a marriage with an educated man.

> My mother had some offices [cleaned offices] and she slept there. Stavros came once in the afternoon. We were sleeping. My poor mother, you know in villages they made a carpet with rags. Small rags and with the pin [fourketa] they stitched to the cloth [linatsa] and they made carpets. And my mother was doing it, she was sitting on the balcony and he said to her, "Do you sleep? What are you doing?" And my mother did not tell him anything. And then he said to her: "Why did you do that to me?" Because my mistress told him, she hadn't told me anything, that we were proceeding my engagement [*proxorousame to thema tou andros mou*]. Together with my cousin. And my mother said, "You are an educated person, you should marry an educated woman. Or to get a [woman with] dowry from your village", and he said to my mother, "You either marry a dowry or a person. Our women are for the fields" [...] And I said to my mother, he will spoil my parquet [she laughs]. We would be stupid of course, if we did not accept it, because he was a good man with a good position. He had said to Anthi that in May he was getting his degree in Chemistry, he was arranging his appointment, and he said "then I want to get married". My mistress knew all this but she hadn't told us anything. Because after we finished with Vaggelis [Galini's husband] and there were the rumors that I was engaged [*logodothika*], she [Anthi] said Stavros will get married as well. As if I asked her if he was going to marry. But this old woman [Anthi] could have told something to my mother.

Her mother's fatalism rests in the notion of knowing one's position in the world. A woman's value was measured by her dowry, and the possession of capital determined her prospects of marriage. Dispossessed families that could not provide women with property treated female children as a burden. The gender ideology of rural communities perceived women as inferior beings and was used to exploit daughters' labour and earnings for the benefit of a family's male members. Galini's earnings from domestic service were sent by her father to her brother. Galini's and her mother's deep-sited knowledge of their inferior position led them to deprive themselves of any decision even when the prospect of a better future seemed feasible. Bourdieu explains that this

fatalism, *amor fati*, arises as objective limits become a sense of limits through the individual's experience of social divisions. Such experiences organize the image of the social world and lead to a sense of one's place in that world, and to the exclusion of oneself from the things and situations from which one is excluded.

In the same way that her labour was not in the realm of Galini's responsibility and choice, so the same happened with her marriage. Galini wanted to marry the man who did the errands in her employers' house. Although they lived under the same roof it was not possible for them to discuss their future or marriage. The decision and the procedure both involved gendered and generational hierarchies. Although he expressed his desire to marry her, he did not express it directly to her. This implies that her opinion or desire did not count in the formal procedure of marriage negotiations and agreement. If we look at the people who mediated and took the decision on behalf of Galini to reject him as a possible husband we understand that the power to decide about the future was generationally and class defined.

Because labour and marriage were inextricably linked, Galini's cousin, her "guardian" as she call her, decided to move Galini to a new post in service in order that she could see her future husband more often. "After she engaged me my husband, she found me another post to be more free to see my husband". Galini's mother is presented as a passive figure, which illustrates her sense of inferiority constructed from her sense of lacking the appropriate body, language and manners due to her rural origin and her economic dispossession. In contrast, Galini's cousin is a very domineering figure. Participating in a network of migrants, she played an active role in reinforcing group cohesion and solidarity networks through marital and labour arrangements.

VI. Unfulfilled Desires and the Performance of Gender/Serving self

The longing for sexual satisfaction that was not be fulfilled within marriage is acknowledged by the interviewees. The fear for their reputation and their ignorance about sexual matters curtailed the satisfaction of flirting and sexual contact. Fatalism and the acceptance of their marriages in their acknowledgement of the qualities of their husbands seems the only resort of those who could not decide of their lives.

> This was my first love and the last. My marriage was arranged, I had a very good husband but this thing a young woman feels happens once in life. You only love once. Once. And he said, you know, Ioanna, if you had let me kiss you that night, I would have gone straight to your father. And I was stupid not to tell him, why didn't you say that you

There was no exit from the claustrophobic feeling that the inability to decide about one's own life created. The self seemed empty of agency, a ghost filled with the obligatory image one had to show to others: parents, employers, and future husbands. The repression of sexual desire which was taught in the family and in service through the oppression of women and instilling of moral doctrines led to a painful process of acknowledging desire, of recognizing it and accepting it as something which a woman has a right to.

> "I liked you, I observed you and I remember once I saw you whitewashing your house". "But I had never seen you", I said, "that's the point". "You like me. Do you like me?" I said yes, what could I say? But this first love they say, I don't know if it ever came. I was always buttoned up. I was very timid as a child. I developed slowly over the years, with Nicos, and as I have already told you I read a lot. Later I went to a doctor because I had a problem and he asked me about sexual matters, I was very backward and he guided me a bit and afterwards I started to feel, to see that marriage is nice, because I became a complete woman; when I was twenty seven years old. That's how the bond between me and Nicos was established. Because until then I hadn't felt what marriage is. I had had two children and I wasn't a complete woman. [Eleftheria]

We see here the contrast between the allocation of the responsibility to preserve chastity to women, and of the right to sex to men, and the allocation of sexual rights to men in marriage, which express the unequal distribution of power between the sexes concerning sexuality. Men exercised these rights both in the marriage bargain, in negotiation with parents in the absence of the girls, as well as within marriage, in which they exercized their right to sex in the emotional absence of their wives. Resentment of the neglect of their desires is strongly felt by the interviewees. To be unaware of the secret negotiations for their marriage was deeply resented, as was the fact that Eleftheria was caught by her future husband's gaze without her having the possibility to respond. In the recollection of the meeting, on the one hand Eleftheria stresses the fact that she had been the object of desire without knowing it and thus without the ability to act on that. On the other hand, on the part of her future husband desire was inseparable from the admiration of her neatness and housekeeping traits, because whitewashing had a cleansing as well as a beautifying effect.

A feeling of bitterness accompanies the accounts of married life when the desire to make the best out of the situation was not feasible. Unfulfilled desire due to husbands' indifference to their wives' sexual desire was a factor causing marital crisis

had honest intentions? But I wouldn't let him kiss me anyway because I didn't trust him. It doesn't matter, I said. You married a nice woman and I am glad for that. It wasn't our luck, it wasn't our destiny. [Ioanna]

The obligatory link between marriage and sexual contact deprived women from any pleasure. There is a vicious circle in the above testimony, the imprisonment of desire in the moral codes of women's proper behaviour and the anxiety about marriage. After Ioanna broke her engagement, a man who had a retail shop whom she had known since she worked as a foster child [*psychokori*], asked her to go out together.

> [...] I didn't give him any right. I told him that I had different principles, and my father too. And I didn't want to give any right to the family in which I lived... no, I had my own character. [...] I said, with pleasure. I wanted it. We went to the cinema; it was a Russian movie. We sat and he didn't even touch my hand. Respect. [The next time we met] he waited for me in Zappeio. We sat, neither him nor myself talked. A strange thing. I didn't want to give rights, but why, I loved him and my soul was trembling for him. Finally, he took me to the bus stop and he tried to kiss me. I didn't let him. He understood. Besides, he asked me to go to an estate at Chalandri. They had money. I said no, we don't go out again, if you don't go to my father and tell him that you want to marry me. That's how I was brought up. How could I know what you'll do to me, what you will tell me, what you will take from me? And then to say that you hang around...

"Not to give rights" is a typical phrase used by the interviewees, and it indicates the internalization of guilt and of the belief that the blame lay always with the woman. What underlies this belief is the unequal distribution of sexual power that privileged men and endowed them with the right to sexual access to women. The interviewees accepted the sexual right of men and internalized the structure of sexual power that this entailed. This gendered allocation of the sexual right was built upon the sexualization of women as the incarnation of evil sexual desire. It was women who provoked men to lose control over their sexuality, and at the same time it was they themselves who were the guardians of their own virtue. Men had a right to sexual pleasure, and at the same time they could blame women for provoking them to lose control over their sexuality. Thus, Ioanna could not accept the invitation, because she feared that the she would be blamed for the very fact of responding to it. Men had a right because women's sexual nature aroused men's sexual desire, and paradoxically they had to tame their nature in order to control men.

There was no exit from the claustrophobic feeling that the inability to decide about one's own life created. The self seemed empty of agency, a ghost filled with the obligatory image one had to show to others: parents, employers, and future husbands. The repression of sexual desire which was taught in the family and in service through the oppression of women and instilling of moral doctrines led to a painful process of acknowledging desire, of recognizing it and accepting it as something which a woman has a right to.

> "I liked you, I observed you and I remember once I saw you whitewashing your house". "But I had never seen you", I said, "that's the point". "You like me. Do you like me?" I said yes, what could I say? But this first love they say, I don't know if it ever came. I was always buttoned up. I was very timid as a child. I developed slowly over the years, with Nicos, and as I have already told you I read a lot. Later I went to a doctor because I had a problem and he asked me about sexual matters, I was very backward and he guided me a bit and afterwards I started to feel, to see that marriage is nice, because I became a complete woman; when I was twenty seven years old. That's how the bond between me and Nicos was established. Because until then I hadn't felt what marriage is. I had had two children and I wasn't a complete woman. [Eleftheria]

We see here the contrast between the allocation of the responsibility to preserve chastity to women, and of the right to sex to men, and the allocation of sexual rights to men in marriage, which express the unequal distribution of power between the sexes concerning sexuality. Men exercised these rights both in the marriage bargain, in negotiation with parents in the absence of the girls, as well as within marriage, in which they exercized their right to sex in the emotional absence of their wives. Resentment of the neglect of their desires is strongly felt by the interviewees. To be unaware of the secret negotiations for their marriage was deeply resented, as was the fact that Eleftheria was caught by her future husband's gaze without her having the possibility to respond. In the recollection of the meeting, on the one hand Eleftheria stresses the fact that she had been the object of desire without knowing it and thus without the ability to act on that. On the other hand, on the part of her future husband desire was inseparable from the admiration of her neatness and housekeeping traits, because whitewashing had a cleansing as well as a beautifying effect.

A feeling of bitterness accompanies the accounts of married life when the desire to make the best out of the situation was not feasible. Unfulfilled desire due to husbands' indifference to their wives' sexual desire was a factor causing marital crisis

in old age. For those women who did not break the silence that concealed the norms that organised the exercise of male right to access their bodies while disregarding their right to sexual pleasure, the repression of sexuality returns in the old age in various forms of bitterness. The accounts of the coldness and the indifference of husbands reveals the command of husbands over their wives' bodies.

Present day ideas about women's rights to sexual pleasure, diffused in television, magazines and newspapers, and made visible through contact with their grandchildren, provided the tools to rework the experience of the past and the language to express the lack of fulfilment. The acknowledgement of this lack, coupled with the lack of communication and intimacy, was a painful process and a disconcerting feeling.

> Thanks God I had a good life with my husband, now in old age, I must tell you, you see things differently. What can I say? I should be ashamed to say this, shouldn't I? How was it possible to have all these children? I don't quite know. It's not like couples nowadays where you know that the other will say what he thinks. Four abortions and three births. Do you know what this means? Without feeling anything. I should be ashamed to say this, I don't know. Was he so cold? And me, how did I conceive? How could a child be made inside me? [...] I tell you, I didn't feel anything, I didn't have enough time to feel. And recently, I [*tou to xtipisa*] told him on my nerves. [Galini]

The different outlook in old age about one's own past has been influenced by present-day expectations of married life diffused in the media. As we see from the reference to today's couples, sexual desire has been acknowledged and legitimized through contemporary discourses on sexuality. In Eleftheria's interview the information provided by doctors and reading made possible the recognition of sexuality, which had been suppressed. Yet, in both testimonies the acknowledgement of sexual pleasure is combined with popular ideals about conception, which has probably been informed by religious doctrine according to which sex has to be linked with reproduction.

There are also stories in which a total negativity towards and dismissal of marriage is expressed, in which married life is perceived as oppressive and in which a strong bitterness towards and contempt for husbands emerge. From the standpoint of the present, married life would be better if it hadn't existed at all. The feeling of loss is so strong that marriage is identified with the loss of life, the loss of a better prospect, nothing more than the curtailment of dreams. The intrusion of kin, although accepted passively in youth, is strongly resented in old-age.

> Galini. If my cousin did not put any obstacle - Virgin Mary, I wish to die before my husband - I would have been better off if I married the

> teacher. He was superior [*mia anoterotita*]. And I wouldn't have this mess. You understand, to create these things. I used to set the alarm clock one o'clock after midnight. In order to get up and leave. I used to take an illegal cab. We gave five drachmas each and there were other people, men and women, cleaners, newspaper sellers. My husband did something very bad, that I couldn't forget. Instead of getting up, opening the window, he turned from the other side and slept. Was it because he was tired, or was he this kind of person? He should take more care of me.
> He doesn't show what he feels and thinks. Now I stay awake all night. If you see his indifference, it is impossible to go back to sleep. He won't even turn side. [...] Now we are the two of us, for fuck sake. We should sit together and talk, to stay late. He likes television. It's O.K. Time flows with the tv. I get up from bed without shoes, and I see him sleeping in the armchair. He wakes up, watches TV and then the same again. I tell him, come to bed, we have gone through a lot of sorrows, marriages, schools and we never discussed in bed our children's problem. [Galini]

One of the main sources of dissatisfaction about married life is lack of intimacy and understanding between the spouses. It is not only economic difficulties that are a source of desperation, but also the lack of communication with and moral support from husbands. This lack marks a whole life, the past as well as the present.

> I didn't marry the one I wanted. My husband hasn't got any manners. I am a delicate person, don't look how I look now. If divorce existed the way it is now, I would have divorced him. [Vania]

> For example it is Saint Valentine's day or the women's festival. He doesn't know it. He says when is Saint Valentine's day? And I say it doesn't matter, every year you buy me presents. And I say, I don't know where to put the rings and the flowers you buy me.[Vania]

The repression of sexuality and the lack of intimacy between spouses returns in old age. The metonymic use of presents that were never given signifies the unfulfilled desires for love and care.

Trying to disentangle the complexity of feelings and relationships, the relationship with one's own past, history and culture is made explicit. Married life is built upon a foundation of compromises and silences. Silences are reworked and leave a sense of bitterness and a sense of different possibilities that were not explored and never will be explored. But above all the testimonies reconstruct an understanding of one's own position defined by the lack of property and cultural capital and the deprivation of status that these lacks entailed. They throw light on the self-censorship that the internalization of gender and class structures produce. It is not only the

relationship between subjectivity and social structure that is illuminated here, but also the historical understanding of the shaping of the self. Beneath silence lies lack of self-esteem, not recognizing oneself as equal, having accepted one's own inferiority as produced by gender and class inequality.

> We live in harmony with my husband as a couple. Always, to tell you the truth, it is me who retreats. If it is to feel bad afterwards and depressed, I try to let it go and we don't fight and we get on. And he got many things he wanted out of my silence. But now we are old I tell him that in many cases you harmed me. You imposed things without my will. If you did the same now, I wouldn't accept them, but I did accept them then. You imposed many things on me, either because I was taught to be submissive, or because I felt inferior to him, because of poverty or because I married without a dowry, without a house. [...] And because I felt inferior I believed that he deserved another woman. And maybe I would have followed a different path.

Here Eleftheria provides an analysis of the self immersed in specific historical and social conditions, a dialogue between subjective formation and the felt experience of economic circumstances and the imprint of history on the self. It is extremely important to follow her narrative to its conclusion because it is her own analysis that provides the means to understand the whole process by which she was made submissive through the strict disciplining of the parental family and in service, and through the extension of the role of the servant into her married life. Submissiveness, the most valued attribute for women both in the family and in service, remains one of the cornerstones for the success and management of family life. Family discipline was a preparation of the self for service. Not only in the sense that it taught practical skills but also in the management of the self. Class inequality is lived in marriage, it is felt in the most intimate and personal relationship.

> I will also tell you this. Because I told you before in our discussion that I had learned from this family [her second employers] to behave, to speak, to be silent when it is appropriate. She said "you will not speak when they don't ask you something. Whatever you see, you will say I didn't see anything", she used to tell me. She had given me good elements. And afterwards, in my future life they were useful. And I, in Nicos' family, I wasn't speaking, I only listened, I learned how to guard myself. Because in the beginning I didn't know. I was spontaneous and if I said something, without ulterior motives and without any intention to insult or gossip about anybody, they took it differently and I found myself always in a mess. And an aunt of Nicos told me: "This is good kin, but when you go you will have your mouth shut. Because we are daughters in-law and they will never love us". And I learned a few things from this woman. What I want to say from

> this: that I was a child that listened. When I was a child and when I saw something nice, I said I will do the same because it is nice.

Silence proved useful not only in marriage but in many ordinary circumstances. It was a rule taught in the parental family, reinforced in service, used in marriage as a magic tool to achieve harmonious relationships between husband and wife and also with kin in order to avoid conflict and misunderstandings.

> My friend loves me because we match as characters. I don't talk. When you don't talk, even if the other lies, even if they tell you that what you did is not done properly and it shouldn't be done like that, then you will go on and have a good life. My husband had a restaurant and he was always annoyed. If I wanted, I could fight with him all day long. But you don't go anywhere like that. [Evdoksia]

VII. Marriage as Struggle: Work and the Management of the Family Budget in the Urban Population

This section traces the contribution of women in the urban population, both refugees and rural migrants from mountainous Greece who settled in Athens, to their family economy. Here the family is going to be approached from the perspective of its economic functions. One of the core aspects of the family economy is the distribution and the management of resources.

We shall explore the gendered roles and arrangements in the family and its emotional dynamics; the stress and, in some cases, the desperation that the division of labour in the family and the allocation of responsibilities produced; the way gender is lived and experienced in a specific social background as well as the way work is perceived.

Division of Labour

The husbands of interviewees from a refugee background were initially employed in the informal economy, working as peddlers, casual labourers in docks, in construction, as labourers in workshops, in iron making, bakeries, and chemicals. In the course of their married life they became owners of small workshops, manufactures, and shops. Some of them used their wives' labour either as homeworkers supplying orders or providing services in retail shops and restaurants. The interviewees worked in or for their husbands' enterprises as well as as seamstresses both at *ateliers* and at home while one was an agricultural producer and worked also as a day labourer during harvest. One moved with her family to nurse her elderly employer from before her marriage. The

interviewees who originated from continental Greece stayed in service jobs such as day cleaning in private houses or in offices, as well as baby-sitting, a similar pattern to Folegandrians after marriage. One stayed in service for life. Their husbands worked as day labourers or as sellers of goods for small enterprises. One who returned to her village of origin worked on the family plots and cattle raising.

The majority of the interviewees undertook paid labour after their marriage, as the economic contribution of both spouses was necessary for the reproduction of the family. Reproduction was postponed in order that women could work and amass money. A common plan was the concentration of capital for the acquisition of a privately owned house. Capital was also saved for the education of male children and the dowries of daughters.

The establishment of a new household after marriage meant tremendous difficulties for both the rural and the refugee population. Co-habitation with parents and siblings, as well as with in-laws, was a temporary solution before establishing an independent household. Co-habitation enabled the couple to amass a lump sum in order to settle in a new house. It also enabled women to work outside the house while their mothers or in-laws looked after their children. All the interviewees today live in their own houses, apart from those who stayed in service for the greater part of their lives. Living in huts or working in the same room where the family slept, as well as restricting the family to one room in order to leave the other for looms, were stages in housing arrangements that lasted for years before more rooms and more space were built. The conditions of housing ameliorated only very slowly because the strategy of buying urban plots and leasing houses required many years to give fruits.

The majority of the interviewees resided in the same area all their lives despite changing houses. This choice facilitated the continuity of labour contacts and of networks of information, which were locally based, and allowed material and psychological support from mothers, in-laws and siblings. An interviewee who moved after the birth of her first child to a different area in the outskirts of the city faced great difficulties in settling. Vania lived in a hut made of wood and straw for nineteen years, which she and her husband built. She bought a plot in Palaio Faliro with money from her job and maternity allowance. Inside the hut they stuck up wallpaper with flour. Adjacent to the hut they built a room with mud-bricks dried in the sun. The house did not have glass panes while the door was so small that Vania lift the pram out of the window. They had a small garden with vegetables, but because next to the house there

was a riverbed and a rubbish dump, Vania was infected by echinococcus. The house was isolated and Vania had to carry the shopping from a great distance and she could not benefit from the support of her sisters, as transportation was very rare. The hut was built without a permit. This was widespread practice among the urban poor due to their need for cheap housing.[33] When the city expanded to the area and apartment blocks started to be built, the police came with a bulldozer to demolish the hut. Vania, who was pregnant, collapsed and they let them to stay for a couple of years until they sold their plot and moved, in 1970, to Kaisariani, her old neighbourhood. Artemis's house, built by her husband and father-in law in an eastern suburb of Attica was demolished twice as it was built without a permit.

Evaggelia and her husband stayed in her mother's house when she got married. Three families lived in this two-room house,. Evaggelia and her husband, her sister with her husband, and her mother with her son moved to the basement, an arrangement widely practised in refugee housing.[34] They all shared the kitchen. As the house had only one entrance, Evaggelia's sister and brother-in-law had to pass through her bedroom. Evaggelia worked in two factories, in the morning from six to two and in the evening from four to eight. When she returned home she had to cook for herself and her husband in order to take food with them. Her husband had opened a shirt shop and because he had taken a loan he was in debt. Postponing the birth of children was a strategy to accumulate money for buying a house. Evaggelia bought a refugee house and moved with her husband and son. When she gave birth to her son after four years of marriage, she stopped working in the factory and supplied her husband's enterprise with shirts she made at home. Later she bought a building plot in Nea Smyrni and then with a loan they bought two two-room apartments which she rented. With the rent they repaid the loan. And then she bought another apartment.

The refugee population had access to factory work and the majority of the interviewees who belonged to these communities worked as factory workers before, and especially after, they went to service. They worked in the factories that surrounded the refugee settlements as well as in workshops and ateliers in the centre of Athens.

---

[33] The lack of any state housing policy and of city planning coupled with a shortage of houses, which led to high leases, resulted to an increasing number of semi-squatters and to the flourishing of an informal housing sector. Retrospective "legalization" of already urbanized areas was the "policy" of urban development and expansion. See, Leontidou, *Poleis tis Siopis*, pp. 236-8.

[34] Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe*, pp. 122-8.

Three of the interviewees' husbands established their own businesses, a small weaving workshop, a shirt making enterprise, and a bakery. This would have been impossible without the contribution of their wives' labour either in the factory or at home supplying orders. After her marriage Aspasia left the factory. Her husband was a peddler in Athinas Street. Aspasia lived with her in-laws while her sister kept the baby when she worked in the factory. Aspasia's mother had promised to build a two-room house on her husband's building plot, which was adjacent his family house. They put a loom in one room and the family lived in the other room. They produced linings for garments. They expanded their business and bought another three looms and built two more rooms next to the house. Later they moved and rented a room and had twelve looms and employed four people. Eleftheria worked in an atelier and she also took work home. Her husband was a bakery worker and then opened his own business. Due to ill health caused by overwork he could not work for two years and he sold his business. They had two building plots and two houses of which they sold the building plots. And in order not to sell the houses, she removed her daughter from school and they both worked. After some years they added another two floors to the house. Aggeliki worked in the fields she had received as compensation for her lost land in Asia Minor and as an agricultural worker harvesting of olives in nearby villages, while her husband worked in town as a docker.

Women who stayed in service for life or married above forty-years old lived alone or in asylums for elderly people. Athina got a pension for being in service for more than sixty years and she rented a two room house. Life in old age was difficult for those who had only a pension. "I want to have a face in society. Nobody can see what I eat. I don't care, I will eat an egg a bit of cheese" [Athina]. As a Folegandrian also said, "the belly hasn't got windows" [Eva]. Thomais moved with her husband to an asylum for elderly people because due to her damaged health they felt insecure living alone. "Life is gone. We will be quiet when it finishes".

Enormous sacrifices were made and the price paid was ill health. The interviewees' illnesses, as well as several operations, were mostly related to work: damaged knees for those who worked as cleaners, operations on their backs due to lifting heavy loads, sinusitis from inhaling fluff, and heart failure due to overwork.

The majority of the interviewees did not leave paid labour after marriage. They undertook paid employment chosen to fit with their mothering and domestic responsibilities. Rural migrants who settled in Athens worked as day workers cleaning

offices and houses, or as stewards. The networks of providing help and circulating information about jobs were restricted to domestic service. As we have already seen, cultural perceptions of labour among the rural population defined the orientation of women towards employment. Domestic service was preferable to factory work as it was considered to ensure the moral integrity of working women. Besides, the interviewees who were internal migrants did not have access to factory work because of the lack of networks in this sector of the labour market. Day work can be seen as an extension of the skills they had acquired in domestic service. Women's labour had to fit with familial responsibilities. Cleaning offices was done during the night and thus women with children could stay at home during the day to look after their children.

A change from live-in service to day-work after marriage was not only perceived to be more compatible with the obligations of the housewife but as a psychological relief. For women who worked as cleaners this was much preferable to live-in-service: "It was different because you left the house you worked in and it was a relief. You were in your own house. You could do the chores or you could do nothing" [Artemis]. Yet both cleaning offices and houses meant long hours, work during the weekend and a heavy load. The demands of employers were very high and day work did not mean an eight hour-day. Artemis worked from seven in the morning until ten in the evening and got a day's wage, she was not paid by the hour. Washing walls, shutters, windows, carpets, and scrubbing the floors on knees required long hours and hard work. Live-in service and marriage were incompatible. But it was not only that day work fit with the responsibilities of wives and mothers. It was the total control of the worker's time and space that made service undesirable. Shifting from live-in service to cleaning jobs was perceived as a continuity due to the skills acquired in service: "I didn't know any other job apart from being a servant. What else could I do? I didn't like to baby sit or work in the factory. I liked this job. It was a torture but I liked it" [Artemis].

For the interviewees paid employment, either in the form of homework or in factories, was not perceived as liberating in the way it was by middle-class females. As Nicole Tabard argued, for working class women "employment is a constant which weakens as the husband's income rises" while for the women of the privileged classes, work is a choice, as is shown by the fact that "the rate of female employment does not

decline as status rises".[35] Pierre Bourdieu argues along the same line that work identity conceals totally different realities when we move from one extreme social space to the other.[36] For working-class wives paid employment signified poorly paid and unpleasant work. In the dialogue between Evaggelia and Aggelina paid employment is defined as tyranny, while withdrawal from it through marriage was perceived as liberation.

> Aggelina. No, when I got married I didn't work. I never worked.
> Evaggelia. When she got married her tyranny was gone away...
> Aggelina. Yes, by all means. He was a very good man.

Whether wives worked in paid employment outside the house or at home, the division of labour in the household was gendered. Wives undertook all the work that a household and rearing children required. Female kin, such as mothers, sisters and mothers in-law, offered childminding services and assisted in household chores in order to make possible the employment of women outside the house. The popular diffusion of feminist ideas about the unequal distribution of labour in the house puts into a new frame the perception of married life and the overwhelming responsibilities of women.

> All my life under the man. The fridge is next to him and he shouts to me to bring him water. *Afentis*. If I get ill, he is incapable of giving me a glass of water. [...] When I tell him something he replies: "I am not *koumourlis*". Yes, he plays the man. But one has to be a man in other things, in the problems of the family, it means to participate in family problems. [...] I still suffer. Other women give me clothes. I don't have money. I am not ashamed to say it, and I don't care, I wear them. I only want to know the person from whom I'll get the clothes. I haven't bought a garment for myself. [...] For example it is Saint Valentine's day or women's festival. He doesn't know it. He says when is Saint Valentine's day? And I say it doesn't matter, every year you buy me presents. And I say, I don't know where to put the rings and the flowers you buy me. [Vania]

> *Aspasia*. Men are cruel and egoists. Open you eyes, you girls, not to dominate you. Whatever you do, he should do. Whether you work or you have children. Because if you work and he comes, he shouldn't lie on the sofa without helping you. Even if it is a plate of food. He should take the child out in order to let you do your job and the baby get a bit of air. Men, if they didn't have us, what would they do?
> *Aspasia's sister*. Yet, things have changed.
> *Aspasia*. Yes, they have changed.
> *Aspasia*'s *sister*. But not dramatically.
> *Aspasia*. They cannot change from one day to the other. Slowly slowly.

---

[35] Quoted in Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 178.
[36] Ibid.

> My husband could not even get a glass of water. We used to come together from work and either my mother in-law or me would lay the table. He was sitting: go get me a glass of water. Get it yourself! But I only did this when we were old, I didn't do it when I was young. I didn't have the mind.

An egalitarian relationship between spouses and a fair division of labour in the house was a desire never fulfilled. In old age women felt more self-confident and financially more secure after their children had established their own households. Under the influence of present-day ideas about marriage, the division of labour in the house and of family responsibilities seemed unfair. The understanding of their subordination led to marital crisis and conflict between the spouses.

> I tell you, if I weren't the manager, not only would my children not have a house but also he wouldn't have, excuse me, a pair of pants for his arse. Now I get his pension and he doesn't even know how much money he gets. His pension. And I don't tell him how much he gets. I went through a lot. [...]. It is not enough for your partner to give you money, he must also participate in the problems. He never said, come here wife, we marry off our children, how do you make ends meet? [Vania]

> If you have money in your pocket, fuck men. Men want you to wash their pants... [Artemis]

The Management of the Family Budget

The management of the family budget has been predominantly the responsibility of wives. Men's indifference and lack of moral support has to be seen not as an individual attribute but as a structural feature of the gender division of roles in the family. The management of the family budget was women's responsibility, but this responsibility did not straightforwardly empower wives. In many households husbands did not hand their wages over to their wives. The money given to wives was inadequate for the support of the family. Yet, because it was their responsibility to make ends meet, the strains of coping were put on women.

> Do you know that I did not have money to dress my children? They were brought up with other people's cast-off garments. And that I didn't have money to buy food to cook. He threw to me five drachmas to make ends meet. [Vania]

The struggle to make ends meet required a variety of skills. The majority of the interviewees stated thrift, patience, submissiveness and housewifery as prerequisites for marriage.

> I want to tell you that I did not have a husband; I want to say by this that he did not participate. Because a couple should cope with the problems together. I was coping alone and I married my children off with my means. I needed moral support from my husband. I didn't have any moral support from my husband. And now through the KAPI [the local centres for elderly people supported by the Ministry of Health and Welfare] I have overcome a lot of problems. I would be in the mental hospital now. Because I had to fight to make ends meet, and I was a very good manager. I wasn't someone who spent money or needed luxury. Neither did I ask much. [...] I come here, I talk, but again I feel very sad. And I say why, why is he complaining?

Areas of women's power after marriage, such as decision-making and management of the family budget, were based on the gendered division of responsibilities. The allocation of these responsibilities to women involved the evasion of responsibility, practical as well as psychological, by the husband. Women's accounts of their skills, their moral and physical strength and the recognition of this by their children are mixed with feelings of resentment for their husbands and recollections of disempowerment. Much satisfaction is expressed about women's power to making ends meet and to endure the most impoverished conditions and their husbands' indifference. Yet, there is no space for nostalgia about the past because the price of these achievements was an enormous burden of work and anxiety.

All the money accumulated from labour was invested in immovable property. This was considered to offer the maximum security, and loans supplemented family income or were used for buying more property. The accumulation of property was connected with the dream of social mobility for offspring. This could be achieved through the education of male as well as female children, and through securing a considerable dowry for daughters. The importance attached to the education of girls should not be neglected even though marriage and immovable property was the first priority for daughters. For that reason, when Eleftheria's husband's bakery enterprise collapsed, she removed her daughter from school in order not to endanger her marital prospects by selling her two houses.

The achievement of these goals presupposed total neglect of the interviewees' own needs. Self-sacrifice was the ultimate expression of a serving subjectivity performed and implemented in its full measure in the role of wife and mother.

> We bought another house. One bought the next. With thrift and privation. As a young woman like you, I did not live my life. And when I had my children I was absolutely devoted. The neighbours used to tell me, 'get out to sit with us for a while'. I never did, my work waited and I had to do the chores and look after my children, I was very clean. [...] And I made two educated men. Not him [her husband]. Myself. [Evaggelia]

Education was valued not only for being considered as the only way to achieve social mobility and a stable income but also for the respect and value it attached to those who possessed a degree.

> His teacher told me, when I went from time to time to get his marks from Anavrita, and I saw them with the big cars and furs, and I said to myself, do you know whose child it is? It's the shirt-maker's child, not the doctor's, not the lieutenant's or the industrialist's. And the teacher said, you should be proud of your son. And I said to myself, if only you knew that we are illiterate. He knew indeed and he said, it doesn't mater. Do you understand?

The rewards of devoting herself to her children's future were compensation for all the humiliations suffered in the past and for self-sacrifice. This pride in having achieved social recognition through the life of another person says much about major social changes in post-war Greece. If it is a narrative of success, the cost was one's own life.

> Since I was five years old and I sensed the world my life is tragic. I haven't got any satisfaction from my life. Only from my children because I see them happy with their families. This satisfies me. Sometimes I am thinking of all the things I went through and I can't sleep at night. [Vania]

> When I bore my first child I told my husband, "if we have more children what are we going to do in this village of ten families?" and he replied, "we do not have money for study". And I didn't sleep all night, thinking what I should do. In the morning he asked me, "why have you been so restless all night?" And I said, "because of what you said. I thought a lot and this is my answer. You will give me the money and I will undertake the rest. I want our children to live better than us". And he replied, "very well". After some time I told him that I wanted a dress and he said, "you wanted studies". This hurt me a lot. I didn't reply. Finally, time passed. The children graduated and went to Athens to do exams. Nikos took the diploma of third captain and Maria got a grant in classics. At this point he told me. I walk above the ground. I

> didn't understand. I said, what does this mean and he said, " I've got a son who is a captain and a daughter who is a teacher". It is not that he didn't want but he was afraid of debt. [...] My children and only my children are my life, my soul, my heart. [Aggeliki]

The above testimony is not a proof of conflicting relationships between spouses. This was a marriage, according to Aggeliki's testimony, based on love, respect and mutual understanding. It rather suggests that wives had full responsibility over the management of the family budget, a responsibility accepted by men. Within the structural organization of family relationships, women used this space to plan the lives of their children. Self-elimination was a subject position occupied and performed by wives because husbands distanced themselves from the management of the family. Wives' power of distributing resources was won and performed on the basis of putting themselves in the most disadvantaged position.

Children's earnings were also managed by mothers, and appropriated in order to finance the studies of younger male siblings. And even after their marriage children continued to help their parents.

> My eldest daughter was working very hard; she worked like a dog. And if I said something to her she didn't reply but in the morning she used to say, "mum, I'm leaving, tell me good bye, otherwise I will not go to work and you will lose. You are the one to lose, mum". And I said good bye. Even during the week she was getting married she worked and gave me her wages. She worked hard and she married late. I finished her house with her money. But I didn't take her money to spare it. I bought her a house and made their dowries. [...] My eldest daughter cooked and sent the food with the pot to me. It sounds strange to starve in this era but what could I do? My son was studying and I told him, just keep on and don't care. I will go and scrub stairs in order that you finish your studies. [Vania]

The persistence of the dowry institution in post-war Athens determined the management and the distribution of the family budget. Aggelina married her daughter off through a matchmaker. She promised 50,000 drachmas to the groom and a sewing machine, which guaranteed an extra contribution to the new household due to the possession of a skill.

> I will tell you something that you will find very difficult to believe. In all my life I have not danced, or sung. I have not put on me a piece of jewellery. I don't tell you anything more. I don't remember youth; a period about which I could say that it was nice. Eternally I was with my children, my mother, eternally there was work. I did everything; the only thing I wasn't was a traitor. I did beg for money, and I stole.

> [...] In my life I never was a coquette. I have never painted my nails. I have never put on make-up. Never, never. That's how my life was. It has happened my children to tell me, why mother [you don't care for yourself] and I say, it doesn't matter, I am proud of you. Now this is my best period. [Aggelina]

Aggelina told these words to me in our second interview. Two years later I met her again and she told me that last time, the day after I left her one-room apartment they had brought her grand son who had had an accident with a motorbike for her to nurse. He stayed in bed for one and a half years. Clearly it was not her best period. This was the last time I saw her. I received a phone call from her telling me that she was dying and that she wanted to see me. She asked to see me because she wanted to add the epilogue of her story, which was simultaneously the epilogue of her life: the cause of her decline was that she had being worrying for her other grandson who was on drugs and this had killed her. Hers was a life eternally in the service of others.

Obsession with work was not only linked to striving for social mobility. Work was the most important element of identity and particularly of female working-class identity. Women's key position in the family, which was the most important unit for the reproduction of society, and their responsibility for the family budget meant that failure to support the family and to provide the means for children's education was an individual failure. Such failures created shame but threatened moreover to disintegrate the self. [Vania]

> When I bore my second child and I went home there wasn't food. I needed to eat because I had a haemorrhage. I had a nervous breakdown. I had depression. Imagine that my first child was crying and I had no breath. I didn't have courage; I didn't have breath. [...] I went through the day with 25 dramia of feta cheese. And I had depression, I cried all day, I cried, I had melancholia; I didn't want to talk, only to cry. I said I would die. I saw that my sisters came dressed in black for my funeral. [...] They brought the cardiologist and he saved me. He said her heart doesn't have any problem; she needs to go to a psychologist.

This shaping of subjectivity in work and in the care for others created a psychic structure defined by obsession with work. This attitude made these women good servants and good wives and mothers. "We washed outside in the yard, we put the wash-tub outside. She hand washed fifty sheets and hundred shirts. She put us at the one end and we washed. I still wash, I want to wash, I hand wash more now than using the washing machine" [Evaggelia]. Maria referred to several incidents in which

neighbours and workers for doing maintenance to her house praised her efficiency and high cleaning standards. At the age of 77 she insists on keeping very high standards in her house: "I am not bored with work. I like work. I want everything clean. I want cleanliness" [Evdoksia].

> I put the wax in a piece of cloth and I spread it on the floor. I waited for a while and then I started to scrub it. This was done kneeling. But I didn't care. I liked work, how can I explain it. I was depressed because I didn't receive any money. When I was engaged my fiancée stopped me. He said that I shouldn't struggle without money. And he told me to stay with his parents. So I became a servant there. [...] My mother in-law worked. I couldn't be idle because I had learned to be a servant [she laughs]. [Artemis]

Generational Conflict

For the refugee community cohabitation was fairly usual after the informal agreement [*logos*] between the girl's father and future husband. The in-laws benefited from the skills acquired in domestic service, and also from values diffused in society such as respect for the older generation. Submissiveness and the capacity to maintain a house and take care of the needs of others were attributes favoured in the marriage negotiations by the side of the future husband. Such accomplishments and the timing of the search for a wife, as well as the choice, were defined by the needs of elderly parents to be cared for. Men handed their wage packet to their mothers who managed family budget according to their priorities concerning family needs. As the contribution of children's earnings was vital for working-class families, the marriage of a son meant the loss of a considerable income for the family. Thus, mothers posed barriers to marriage and they tried to postpone it as long as they could.

> I had a mother in-law; there are no words to describe her. I was engaged for three years, because my husband was in the army. My father had told her that he hadn't anything to give, that I am poor, and that he will give what he can. I had bought furniture and I had taken it to my mother-in-law and she thought that my husband had bought it. My husband gave all his money directly to his mother. But because she was preparing a house, she had spent all the money he gave her. And she postponed the marriage. And when we arranged the dates for the marriage, she said the curse: the wedding wreath to turn black; if it wasn't her to set the date. And my husband took his trunk with his dowry, which consisted of two-three pants and vests and threw it out of the window.

The foundations of the "custom" that required daughters' marriage to precede the sons' were primarily economic. Sons had to contribute to their sisters' dowries, an arrangement faced by many men with resentment as it blocked men from achieving adulthood and establishing their own family. This arrangement became a popular theme, exploited abundantly in film and especially in comedy, as it undermined masculinity by positioning men between women, namely the sister and the girlfriend. In real life, Evaggelia was engaged for eight years because her mother in-law's did not let her son marry before his sisters. Aggeliki married in the dark atmosphere of her mother's-in law disagreement about the marriage. Her husband worked the family's fields in Crete where they settled after the war in 1922. The eldest brother managed the family budget without giving him any money after selling the crop. Thus the marriage would put restrictions on the parental family budget as part of the income had to move to the new family. Besides, if the son established a new family with a separate budget, the parental family would be deprived of his the unpaid labour, which finally happened. When a neighbour abandoned the fields he had got after the exchange of populations, Aggeliki asked that these devolve on her as she was the only survivor of her family from Asia Minor. She received 140 olive trees, a vineyard and two small plots for vegetables.

> My mother in-law could not realize that her son was married and that he would live with his wife. They argued every day and she told him "you married her naked and brought her here without considering your sister". Although she had a young son. I was sitting in the corner without any right in this house. I was thinking where to go and what to do. She left from the house and stayed with her sister. My husband went to get her back but she didn't want to come. Finally an aunt gave us a little house and we moved there. We took our stuff, a bed, a quilt, two rags for the floor and nothing else. The aunt brought us a pot, two plates, two spoons and two forks. [...] My sister in-law could not give us anything because the big brother kept everything.

Aggeliki had lived with her in-laws for four years after her aunt handed her to the family. Her mother in-law insisted that her son should send her to work as a servant in order to accumulate a dowry, but he refused. The respect accorded by wives to the in-laws, and especially to the mother in-law, points to the particularity of the mother-son relationship.

Co-habitation with the in-laws before and after marriage involved caring for them. As Aspasia said, "when I was engaged I became a servant for my mother in-law. I didn't care. I liked work and I still like it".

Generational conflict due to the exploitation of daughters-in law illustrates that women's power/powerlessness is not a given but changes during their life trajectories. Mothers played an important role in determining their daughters' and their sons' future' because they exercised their power in order to influence decisions concerning entering or withdrawing from work, the form of labour, distribution of earnings and marriage. Mothers' power was grounded on the hierarchical structure of the family, which was not organized solely along gender lines but age lines too.

These interviews offer an important insight in individual decisions concerning fertility and its control. The decline of fertility has been perceived as a structural change, influenced by processes such as industrialization, modernization, and urbanization.

Taking control of their own fertility is conceived by the women as a major achievement and at the same time reveals the horrors of their lives as children due to poverty and overcrowding. Evaggelia's experience encapsulates the location of subjectivity *in difference* from both younger women's lives and from their mother's lives. This form of subjectivity reveals women's agency in controlling their reproduction which is related to external factors such as information and the means of contraception, access to which was widespread in the working class in the fifties. It shows concretely the way in which these external factors are used and reworked by individuals in order to shape the future and create better opportunities for their children in constrained circumstances. Evaggelia has two children and she had an abortion after the second child:

> I am very tough, a very strong character. We hadn't got anything, but for my children I didn't want it [a bad life]. Especially education. It was a great anxiety [*kaimos*] inside me. My mother did not have anything. Those women didn't know. They had many children; they didn't know whom to look after first. Whom to buy shoes, a bag for school, we didn't have a pencil, we had one and we fought over it, who is going to use it. This thing made me not want to have more children. Although I wanted to have another two children. I wanted, but this thing made me not have more. And now I have regretted it.
> -Had you been thinking of your own life as a child?
> Yes, yes, yes, this made me decide. When I imagined it, I got out of the bed in the middle of the night. And I said no, I want these children to be brought up the way I want.
> -They didn't have the means to stop....
> And they had children one after the other. And they didn't care. They put us sauces in bread; they didn't care if we had clothes or not.

Yet, she does not align herself and her own life with younger women's experiences: "I didn't live my life like you nowadays. I didn't enjoy. And when I had my children I was completely devoted to them".

The interviewees who are second generation refugees and lived their childhood in extreme deprivation questioned their mothers' uncontrolled reproduction.

> Mum, why did you have all these children when you knew that you didn't have the means? She said, my daughter, in those days we didn't know how to guard ourselves. And our husbands were barbarous. Asia Minor people. [Eleftheria]

Generational conflict was very often talked about in ethnic terms by the second-generation refugee population, which indicates a tension in their identities as Greeks and refugees. The "women from the Orient" and "Asia Minor people" were signifiers of the backward, of the barbarous, of the uneducated; and at the same time of generosity, beauty, cleanliness. These signifiers served as metonymies in order to talk about generational conflict and to set past mentalities in opposition to present ones. At the same time, the constrains of their childhood were personified in the parents and in-laws as this was the only authority that was held responsible. The concept of family as the most important unit for the reproduction of society entailed that parents held the primary responsibility for the welfare of its members.

> We had a dad, Nicos' dad, I had created a very nice little house, and these were people from Asia Minor, ignorant, I don't know how to tell you, it is embarrassing. I will tell you only that they didn't understand that as young people we have needs and that we wanted to be alone. We didn't dare to close the door of our bedroom. We had a bedroom, a room and kitchen. They hadn't the slightest discretion to think to close the door. And can you believe that when we wanted to get together like a couple, we lay on the cement like animals, so that the old men wouldn't hear us. Archaic things. [...]
> "I didn't have any reason to get married but what made me take this decision was that I wanted to be with my father". [...] And I told him yes. It is your father and parents shouldn't be neglected. But I didn't know the consequences, what it means to live with an old man who drinks and all the things that come with it, things that I can tell you and others that cannot be said. And because of that I got very ill. I had an ulcer and I had an operation. [Eleftheria]

> I had my mother-in-law with me, a very domineering [*aftarxiki*] woman, you know how these Asia Minor women were, these women from the Orient, I had my sister-in-law, and there was no time to look after myself. [Aggelina]

Conclusion

The lives of the interviewees who came from a moderate rural background as well as those who belonged to the poor urban refugee communities were so much integrated with familial goals that there was not much space left for individual plans and making of their lives. An autonomous self-identity was denied to them. The control of parents and sometimes siblings over girls was not restricted on their childhood and on the decision to send them as servants. It involved decisions about marriage and the choice of husbands, the timing of migration and the return to the community, and control over earnings.

Whether urban or rural, the family constituted above all for the women I interviewed the place of work. It was the terrain of cooperation and of conflict of interests, of solidarity and exploitation, of emotions and obligations, the place where one's position in the world was learned. It was the place where economy, politics and emotions were intertwined. Conceptualizing the family as a creative agent, it is endowed with subjectivity in its full sense. However, oral history showed the unequal distribution of power among family members and the subjection of some of its members to the needs and decisions of more powerful ones. This power was distributed along gender and age lines. Subjects who ruled the family deprived less powerful subjects of any possibility to take decisions concerning their lives.

The history of female labour cannot be pursued without putting it in the context of the history of the family. Factors such as age, gender and class were determining for the life paths of women and for their entrance into the labour market, their trajectory within it and withdrawal from it. The hierarchical relationships in the family constructed and practiced along gender lines and the gendered notions of labour in the three different communities as well as the primary importance of family's needs influenced the choice of employment and the specific function of domestic service as well as its meaning not only for individuals but also for families.

Women were primarily defined by their position as daughters. They were aware of their economic role in the family and of being part of an economy in which bodies and resources were managed by parents. In rural as well as in refugee families parental authority rested on the capacity of parents to manage not only resources but also to handle the bodies of children as commodities.

The interviewees' lives were marked predominantly by hard labour paid as well as unpaid. As girls they participated actively in the family economy providing money as workers in factories or in domestic service. Through their subordination to family needs, they were

defined by their capacity to offer their selves in the service of others. In marital negotiations they were measured by their serving skills. A work ethic was created grounded on a definition of women as agents of the welfare of the family. Their self-identity was absorbed by their positioning as carers and they led their lives according to this definition because their self-esteem and value as individuals were based on the very denial of individuality. They held primary responsibility for the reproduction of the family and for securing a better future for their offspring, a future that was dependent on the suppression and sacrifice of their own desires. Bodies were shaped and damaged by labour and emotional bonds were unimaginable without the exchange between labour and love.

The meanings assigned to labour are historically bound. Cultural ideas of labour in Greek historiography and in the labour movement have devalued female labour and subjectivity. Domestic servants were excluded from both because they did not conform to the ideal type of proletariat. The division between worker and servant in the interwar period constructed domestic service as a different form of employment. In fact, during the interwar period, the status of employment was denied to domestic service. Domestic service was excluded from the labour legislation and the social insurance scheme and since the nineteenth century it was regulated by the police. The arguments and debates on social policy by different groups in society (journalists, feminists, philanthropists, state agents, and legislators) reveal the ambivalences towards this form of employment. These political ideas shaped society's ideas about valuable and respectable forms of labour and produced a certain subjective sense of domestic labour and feelings of shame to those who worked as servants.

I have dealt in this thesis with traumatic memories produced by displacement from narratives through which an experience could have been articulated. With selective memories that excluded aspects of subjectivity marked by stigmatization and produced isolation from one's own self. These memories were underlain by the shame of revealing a stigmatized identity. When shame was faced, memories dealt with the trivial because it is in the most trivial of situations that shame is produced.[1] They dealt with the relation to one's body, its presentation to others, and its relation to space as well as with material things. The correlation between the physical space a body claims and the place one occupies in social space. The memories of experiences of shame were not used here only because they show the marks of social conditioning inscribed on one's body, language, and appearance through the relationship between mistress and servant. They were used above all because they throw light on the

[1] Lynd, *Shame*, p. 41.

understanding of the process through which social subordination is produced, by revealing the self-awareness and self-understanding of being made in the family and remade in domestic service, and of the making of oneself as inferior. They show that experiencing the relationship with mistresses sharpened awareness of social divisions and of one's identity, and of the inscription of the divisions of the social world on one's body and self. Bourdieu has argued that social divisions become principles of division, and that objective limits become a sense of limits, producing though the experiencing of objective limits the sense of one's place. The *sense* of limits implies *forgetting* the limits. These principles of social division, Bourdieu continues, are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and cannot be made explicit.[2] The acknowledgement of shame in the memory of the experience of domestic service shows instead the recognition and consciousness of the limits and of the process of the making of class subordination.

The employer-servant relationship was a gendered relationship and it was constructed as such not only through exclusion from certain politics and legislation that developed in the interwar period but through the efforts of middle-class women to undertake full responsibility and control of this relationship.

Finally, I have tried to delineate some of the technologies used by employers to create a subject in their service. These are technologies that characterize total institutions and create roles that cover every aspect of life and a difference of perception between self and other. Those subjected to these technologies came to understand themselves as possessing certain traits and qualities of character that were reproduced in their subsequent lives. These traits and qualities define what I have called a serving subjectivity.

---

[2] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 471.

Bibliography

A. Unpublished Sources

I. Interviews

II. *Archeio Rozas Imvrioti* [Archive of Roza Imvrioti] (private)

Archeio Sichronis Koinonikis Istorias [Archive of Contemporary Social History]

Genika Archeia tou Kratous, Metaxas, B, folder 20-24, *Patriotikos Sindesmos Ellinidon Ginaikon*. [General Archives of the State, Metaxas Archive, B, folder 20-4, Patriotic Association of Greek Women].

Ipourgeion Exoterikon, Koinonia ton Ethnon, folder 1, 84 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, League of Nations].

Ipourgeion Exoterikon, Koinonia ton Ethnon, folder 3, 65 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, League of Nations, folder 3, 65].

Ipourgeion Exoterikon, Koinonia ton Ethnon, Astinomia, Dimosia Asfaleia, Folder 98/2, 30 May 1874 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ League of Nations, Police, Public Security, File 98/2, 30 May 1874].

Diefthinsi Astinomias Piraia, Vivlio adikimaton kai simvanton,1941-1942. [Police Headquarter of Piraeus/ Minute-book of the Police Headquarter of Piraeus, 1941-1942].

Police Headquarter of Piraeus/ Minute-book of the Police Headquarter of Piraeus, 1945.

B. Published Sources

I. Statistics

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Geniki Statistiki Ipiresia tis Ellados [Ministry of Economics, Statistique Générale de la Grèce, Population de fait de 10 ans et plus sexe et profession principale et secondaire, (recensement de 27 Octobre 1907), Athens 1908.

Ministry of Economics, Statistique Générale de la Grèce, Population de fait de 10 ans et plus sexe et profession principale et secondaire, (recensement de 19 Decembre 1920), Athens 1924.

Ministry of Economics, Statistique Générale de la Grèce, Population de fait de 10 ans et plus sexe et profession principale et secondaire, (recensement de 15-16 Mai 1928), Athens 1932.

Statistique Générale de la Grèce, Refugiés après la désastre d' Asie Mineure, âgés de 10 ans et plys, par sexe et profession (recensement de 1928*), Miniaion Statistikon Deltion*, 1929.

II. Reports

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Diefthinsis Ergasias, Ektheseis tou prosopikou Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon tǫ etos 1921, Athens 1923 [Ministry of Economics, Reports of the body of inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation in 1921, Athens 1923].

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Deifthinsis Ergasias kai Koinonikis Pronoias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Erevnai epi ton sinthikon ergatikis katoikias ton poleon Athinon-Piraios,1921, Athens 1922 [Ministry of Economics, Report on the conditions of working-class housing of the cities of Athens and Piraeus in 1921, Athens 1922].

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Diefthinsis Ergasias kai Koinonikis Pronoias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Perilipsis ton ektheseon tou prosopikou Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon dia ta eti 1927-1928, Athens 1930 [Ministry of Economics, Department of Labour and Social Welfare, Summary of the reports of the body for the labour inspection for the implementation of labour legislation 1927-8, Athens 1930].

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Ektheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon kai ton sinthikon ergasias en Elladi kata to etos 1931, Athens 1934 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body for the labour inspection for the implementation of labour legislation and the conditions of labour in Greece in 1931, Athens 1934].

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Ektheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon kai ton sinthikon ergasias en Elladi kata to 1932, Athens 1935 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation and conditions of work in 1932, Athens 1935].

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Epitheorisis Ergasias, Ektheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos Ergasias epi tis efarmogis ton ergatikon nomon kai ton sinthikon ergasias en Elladi kata to 1933, Athens 1935 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation and conditions of work in 1933, Athens 1935].

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Diefthinsis Ergasias, Ektheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos kata to 1934, Athens 1936 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation in 1934, Athens 1936].

Ipourgeion Ethnikis Oikonomias, Diefthinsis Ergasias, Ektheseis kai pepragmena Somatos Epitheoriseos kata to 1934, Athens 1937 [Ministry of Economics, Report and proceedings of the body of labour inspectors for the implementation of labour legislation in 1935, Athens 1937].

Ministry of Economics /Report of the Secretary-General to the CSW on the UNESCO study of the educational opportunities for women, E/CN.61/146, 9 May 1950.

III. Police Provisions

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Egiklioi tis Diefthinsis tis Doiikitikis Astinomias Athinon kai Piraios [Police Headquarters of Athens], *Peri Ipireton, trofon, ipiretrion kai ipiretomesiton* [On servants, wet nurses and servant agents], no. 39, 25 Nov. 1870.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Police Headquarters of Athens, *Peri ipireton, ipiretrion trofon kai ipiretomesiton* [On servants and servant agents] no. 121, 12 Nov. 1879.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Police Headquarters of Athens, *Peri ipiretomesiton, ipiretomesitrion, ipireton, ipiretrion kai trofon* [On servant agents, servants and wet nurses], no. 1905.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Police Headquarters of Athens, *Peri ipireton kai ipiretrion* [On servants] vol. b., no. 34, 12 May 1918.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Police Headquarters of Athens, *Peri tropopoiiseos tis ip. ar. 4/24 tou 1918 astinomikis diatakseos peri ipireton kai ipiretrion* [Amendment of the 1918 no. 4/24 police provision on servants], vol b., no. 9, 4 February 1919.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Police Headquarters of Athens, *Peri Ipoxreoseon ipireton, ipiretoumenon kai ipiretomesiton* [On the obligations of servants, employers and servant agents], no. 147, 6 August 1937.

IV. Legislation

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Peri ergasias ginaikon kai anilikon [On the Employment of Women and Juveniles] (Act 4029, 28 January 1912), no 46, 7 Feb. 1912.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Peri kathikonton ton apotelounton to soma tis Epitheoriseos tis Ergasias kai Epopton Ergasias [On the duties of inspectors and supervisors of labour constituting the body of inspectors on labour], no. 229, 28 July 1912.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Peri pliromis ton imeromisthion ergaton kai peri ton misthon ton ipireton kai ipalilon [On the payment of wages of workers and of the salaries of servants and clerks] (Act 4030, 1 Feb. 1912), no. 36, 1 February 1912.

Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Peri epektaseos tou nomou 2112 "peri kataggelias tis simvaseos ergasias ton idiotikon ipallilon" kai epi ton ergaton, texniton kai ipireton [, no. 158, 18 July 1920.
Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Peri kodikopoiiseos eis en eniaion keimenon ton nomon peri pliromis ton imeromisthion ton ergaton kai peri ton misthon ton ipireton kai ipallilon, [On Codification in One and Unified Text of the Laws On the Payment of the Wages of Workers and of the Salaries of Servants and Clerks], no. 189, 21 August1920.
Fillon Efimeridos tis Kiverniseos, Katastatikon Asilou Agias Aikaterinis [Memorandum of the Asylum of St Caterina], vol. 1, no. 65, 8 April 1893.

V. Journals-Newspapers

Ellinis (1921-1940)
Efimeris ton Kirion (1887-1889, 1892,1894,1895, 1903-1912)
Ergatiki Ellas (1937,1938, 1940)
Ergasia (1930, 1933)
Evdomas (1928, 1930)
O Agonas tis Ginaikas (1923-1932)
To Paidi (Organo tou PIKPA) (1930-1931, 1934-1939)
Sosialistiki Zoi (1931)
Sofronistikai Pliroforiai (1939)

VI. Books-Articles

Abu-Lughod, Lila, and Lutz, Catherine, (eds.), *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.
Adams, K., and Dickey, S., (eds.), *Home and Hegemony: Domestic Service and Identity Politics in South and Southeast Asia*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2000.
Agapitos, Spilios, "Cities' Hygiene", *Ergasia*, 10-5-1930.
Agriantoni, Christina, "Viomichania", *I istoria tis Elladas tou eikostou aiona, 1900-1922: Oi aparches*, vol. 1, Athens, Vivliorama, 2000.
Aivaliotakis, N.E., *Ai oreinai lekanai Feneou-Stimfalias*, Arxeion Georgooikonomikon Meleton tis Agrotikis Trapezis tis Ellados Athens, 1941.
Aivaliotakis, N.E.,*O kampos tis Messinias kai ai oreinai lekanai aftou*, Arxeion Georgooikonomikon Meleton tis Agrotikis Trapezis tis Ellados, Athens 1942.

Allen, Peter, "Internal Migration and the Changing Dowry in Modern Greece" in John Koumoulides, *Hellenic Perspectives: Essays in the History of Greece*, University Press of America, Boston 1980.

Alonzo, Philippe, *Femmes employées: la construction sociale sexuée du salariat*, Paris: l' Harmattan, 1996.

Amiralis, Giorgos, *Tiniakes andavgeies: Istoria-Laografia*, Athens 1996.

Appadurai, Arjun, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value", in Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1986.

_____,"Topographies of the Self: Praise and Emotion in Hindu India" in Lila Abu Lughod and Catherine Lutz, (eds.), *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Arru, Angiolina, "The Distinguishing Features of Domestic Service in Italy", *Journal of Family History*, vol. 15, no 4, 1990.

Asdrachas, Spyros, *Oikonomia kai nootropies*, Athens, Ermis, 1988.

Avdela, Effi and Psarra, Angelika (eds.), *O feminismos stin Ellada tou Mesopolemou: Mia anthologia*, Athens, Gnosi, 1985.

Avdela, Effi, *Dimosioi ipalliloi genous thilikou, Katamerismos tis ergasias kata fila sto dimosio tomea*, 1908-1955, Idrima Erevnas kai Paideias tis Emporikis Trapezas tis Ellados, Athens, 1990.

Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, New York, Beacon Press, 1969.

Bafounis, Ioannis, "La formation d' une ville nouvelle, le Piree au XIXe siècle (1835-1879)" Unpublished PhD thesis, Paris VI, 1986, p. 351.

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World* (trans. H. Iswolsky), Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1968.

Benmayor, Rina and Skotnes, Andor (eds.), *Migration and Identity*, "Between Identities", Homi Bhabha interviewed by Paul Thompson, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Berg, Maxine, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain*, London, Routledge, 1994 (2nd edition).

Beverley, John, "The Margin at the Center: On Testimonio [Testimonial Narrative]" in S. Smith and J. Watson (eds.), *De/Colonizing the Subject*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994.

Bourdieu, Pierre, *Andriki Kiriarchia* (trans. P. Georgiou, A. Kapella, S. Nasaina, E. Stamatelou, Th. Psichojios), Athens, Delfini, 1996.

_____, *In Other Words: Essays towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990.

_____, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (trans. Richard Nice), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984.

_____, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice), Cambridge, 1977.

Brögger, J., "Conflict Resolution and the Role of the Bandit in Peasant Society", *Anthropological Quarterly*, 41, 1968.

Cassia, Paul Saint, and Bada, Constantina, *The Making of the Modern Greek Family: Marriage and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Athens*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Certeau, Michel de, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press, (trans. Brian Massumi) 1995.

Charilaou, Alkiviadis, *I nisos Folegandros*, Athens 1888.

Chaytor, Miranda, "Husband(ry): Narratives of Rape in the Seventeenth Century", *Gender and History*, vol. 7, no. 3, November 1995.

Chinn, Carl, *They Worked All their Lives: Women of the Urban Poor in England, 1880-1939.*

Connerton, David, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Cunningham, Hugh, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since Seventeenth Century*, London, Blackwell, 1991.

Da Molin, Giovanna, "Family Forms and Domestic Service in Southern Italy from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries", *Journal of Family History*, vol. 15, no 4, 1990.

Davidoff, Leonore, "Domestic Service and the Working-Class Life Cycle", *Society for the study of labour history*, no 26, Spring 1973.

_____, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class,* Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995.

Delta, Penelope, *Anamniseis, 1899*, ed. by Pavlos Zannas and Alexandros Zannas, Athens, Ermis, 1990.

Dertilis, G.B., Frangiadis, Alexandros, "Oi megaloi stathmoi tis ellinikis oikonomias", *Oikonomikos Tachydromos*, special issue, 23 Dec. 1999.

Donzelot, Jacques, *The Policing of Families: Welfare Versus the State*, (trans. Robert Hurley), London, Hutchinson, 1980 (1st ed. 1977).

Dritsa, Margarita, "Prosfyges kai ekviomichanisi", in Th. Veremis and G. Goulimis, *Eleftherios Venizelos: Koinonia, oikonomia, politiki stin epoxi tou*, Gnosi, Athens, 1989.

Edelman, Bernard, "The Character and His Double", *Identity Documents*, ICA Publications, 1994.

Efimeris ton sizitiseon tou neou Astikou, no. 11, 23-30 April 1931.

Enloe, Cynthia, "Just like one of the family: Domestic servants in World Politics", in C. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press (updated edition 2000).

Fairchilds, Cissie, *Domestic Enemies: Servants and Their Masters in Old Regime France*, The John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984.

Farazoulis, Dionisios, *I xristianiki oikogeneia*, Zoi, Athens 1930.

Farge, Arlette, *Fragile Lives: Violence, Power and Solidarity in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (trans. Carol Shelton), 1993.

Featherstone, Mike, *Consumer Culture and Post-moderninsm*, London, Sage Publications, 1991.

Fentress, James, and Wickam, Chris, *Social Memory*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992.

Flax, Jane, "Multiples: On the Contemporary Politics of Subjectivity", *Human Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1–2, April 1993.

_____, "Taking Multiplicity Seriously", *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, vol. 32. No 4, 1996.

Fotiadis, Efstratios, *I eglimatousa ginaika: Meleti psychologiki, koinoniologiki kai eglimatologiki*, Athens 1932.

Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: An Introduction, Vintage Books, New York (trans. Robert Hurley), Vintage Books, New York 1980.

Fountanopoulos, Kostas, "Ergasia kai ergatiko kinima sti Thessaloniki, 1908-1936", Athens 1998 [Unpublished PhD thesis].

Fox, Pamela, *Class Fictions: Shame and Resistance in the British Working-Class Novel, 1890–1945*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1994.

Friedl, Ernestina, *Vasiliika, a Village in Modern Greece,* New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

Friedl, Ernestina, "Dowry and Inheritance in Modern Greece", *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Series II, XXII, 1959.

_____, *Vasiliika, a Village in Modern Greece,* New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

_____, "Kinship, Class and Selective Migration" in J.G. Peristiani (ed.), *Mediterranean Family Structures*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 363-388.

Gallagher, Catherine, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form 1832-1867*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Gallop, Jane, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction*, Macmillan, 1982.

Gardikas, Konstantinos, "Ergasia kai eglimatikotis", *To Paidi*, nos 31-32, May-Aug. 1935.

_____, "Ilikia kai eglimatikotis", *Sofronistikai Pliroforiai*, year 4, no. 3, 1939.

_____, "To fylon kai I eglimatikotis", *Sofronistikai Pliroforiai*, year 4, no. 2, 1939.

Gavalas, Zafeirios, *I nisos Folegandros*, Athens, 1886.

Giakakis, Georgios, *Dimografika Kykladon, 1821-1971*

Giannouli, Dimitra, "American Philanthropy in the Near East: Relief to the Ottoman Greed Refugees, 1922-23", Kent State University, 1922. (Unpublished PhD thesis).

Gill, Lesley, *Gender, Class, and Domestic Service in Bolivia*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1986.

Godelier, Maurice, "Work and its Representation", *History Workshop Journal*, no 10, 1980.

Goffman, Erving, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, Anchor, New York, 1961.

_____, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1963.

Goldman, Anne E., "Is That What She Said?", *Cultural Critique*, no. 25, Fall 1983.

Goody, Jack and Tambiah, S. J., *Bridewealth and Dowry*, Cambridge 1973.

Goody, Jack, "Women, Class and Family", *New Left Review*, no. 219, 1996.

Goody, Jack, Thirsk, Joan, Thompson E.P. (eds.), *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Eupope 1200-1800*, Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Graham, Hilary, "The Concept of Caring in Feminist Research: The Case of Domestic Service", *Sociology*, vol. 25, no. 1, February 1991.

Grazia, Victoria de, "Empowering Women as Citizen-Consumers", in Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough (eds.), *The Sex of Things, Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, California, University of California Press, 1994, pp. 275-286.

Gregson, Nicky, and Lowe, Michelle, *Serving the middle classes: class, gender and waged domestic labour in contemporary Britain*, London, Routledge, 1994.

Hall, Stuart, "Minimal Selves", in *The Real Me: Post Modernism and the Question of Identity*, ICA Documents, no. 6, London, 1987.

_____, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", in S. Hall and Paul du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London, Sage Publications, 1996.

Hareven, Tamara, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change", *American Historical Review*, vol. 96, no. 1, 1991,.pp. 95-124.

_____, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Harris, Ruth, "Melodrama, Hysteria and Feminine Crimes of Passion in the Fin-de-Siècle", *History Workshop Journal*, no 25, 1988.

Hatch, Elvin, *Respectable Lives: Social Standing in Rural New Zealand*, University of California Press, 1992.

Hatjiiosif, Christos, "Emporikes paroikies kai anexartiti Ellada: erminies kai provlimata", *O Politis*, no. 62, 1983.

Hecht, Jean J., *The Domestic Servant in Eighteenth-Century England*, (1st pub. 1956; repr. 1980).

Hellman, Judith Adler, *Mexican Lives*, New York, 1994.

Herzfeld, Michael, "Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems", *Man*, vol. 15, 1980.

_____, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece*, University of Texas, Austin, 1982.

Higginbotham, Elizabeth, and Romero, Mary (eds.), *Women and Work: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Class*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 1997.

Higgs, Edward, "Domestic Service and Household Production", in Angela John (ed.), *Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918*, 1986.

Hill, Bridget, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1996.

Hirschon, Renée, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989.

Hochschild, Russell Arlie, "Emotion Work, Feeling rules, and Social Structure", *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 85, no. 3, 1979, pp. 551–575.

Horn, Pamela, *The Rise and the Fall of the Victorian Servant*, Dublin, 1975.

Hufton, Olwen, "Women, Work and Family", in Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (eds.), *A History of Women*, vol. 3, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993.

Humphries, Stephen, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1981.

Hunt, Margaret, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and Family in England, 1680-1780*, 1996

John, Angela, (ed.), *Unequal Opportunities Women's Employment in England 1800-1918.*

Joyce, Patrick, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Kalpourtzi, Eva, *Siggenikes sxeseis kai stratigikes antallagon. To paradigma tis Naxou ton 17 aiona*, Ellinika Grammata, Athens, 2001.

Kaplan, Marion, (ed.), *The Marriage Bargain: Women and Dowries in European History*, Harrington Park Press, New York 1985.

Karamouzi, Anthoula, "Recording and mapping of refugee settlements", *O xerizomos and i alli patrida: Oi prosfigoupoleis stin Ellada*, Etairiea Spoudon Neoellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paideias, Athens 1997.

Kasdagli, Aglaia, *Land and Marriage, Settlements in the Aegean: A Case Study of Seventeenth-Century Naxos*, Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies and Vikelea Municipal Library of Iraklion, Venice, 1999.

Kaye, Harvey J., *The British Marxist Historians*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1984.

Kenna, Margaret, "The Idiom of Family" in J.G. Peristiani, *Mediterranean Family Structures*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 347-362.

Kent, D. A., "Ubiquitous but Invisible: Female Domestic Servants in Eighteenth Century London", *History Workshop Journal*, no 28, 1989.

Kitroeff, Alexander, *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919-1937: Ethnicity and Class*, London, Ithaca Press, 1989.

Kitromilides, Paschalis, and Alexandris, Alexis, "Ethnic Survival, Nationalism and Forced Migration", *Bulletin of the Center for Asia Minor Studies*, Vol. 5, 1984-5.

Kolodny, Emile, *La Population des îles de la Grèce*, Aix-en-Provence, Edisud, 1987.

_____, *Chora D' Amorgos: Un Village Cycladien*, Universite de Provence, 1992.

Korasidou, Maria, *I Athlii ton Athinon kai i therapephtes tous*, Istoriko Archeio Ellinikis Neolaias, Athens, 1995.

Kostis, Kostas, *Agrotiki oikonomia kai Georgiki Trapeza*, Athens, MIET, 1987.

Kottou, Alexandra, "The child in the new civil code", *To Paidi*, no. 10, year 2, Nov.-Dec. 1931.

Kouhtsoglou, Danai and Kouhtsoglou, Nikos, "The Servant's Law", *Encyclopedia ton Ginaikon*, Athens1967.

Koutsoumaris, Aristotelis, "The welfare of the child", *Elefthero Vima*, 6 July 1938.

_____, "Social provision for the protection of the child in our country".

_____, "The need for a systematic organization of social welfare", *Elefthero Vima*, Friday 23 February 1934.

_____, "The need to eliminate parental authority", *Elefthero Vima*, 22 March 1931.

_____, *I ginaika thima tis somatemborias: Oi efthines tou kratous kai tis koinonias*, Athens, 1963.

Kracauer, Siegfried, *History: The Last Things before the Last*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1969.

Kuchta, David, "The Making of the Self-Made Man: Class, Clothing, and English Masculinity, 1688-1832", in Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough (eds.), *The Sex of Things, Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, California, University of California Press, 1994, pp. 54-78.

LaCapra, Dominick, "The Personal, the Political and the Textual: Paul de Man as Object of Transference", *History and Memory*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1992, pp. 5-31.

_____, "Trauma, Absence, Loss", *Critical Inquiry*, no. 25, Summer 1999, pp. 697-727.

Lambiri-Dimaki, Jane, "Dowry in Modern Greece: An Institution at the Crossroads between Persistence and Decline" in Marion A. Kaplan (ed.), *The Marriage Bargain: Women and Dowries in European History*, New York, Harrington Park Press, 1985, pp. 165-178.

Laslett, Peter, "Introduction: The History of the Family" in P. Laslett, and R. Wall, (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge University Press, 1972.

_____, "Servi e servicio nella struttura sociale europea", *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 68, no 2, 1988.

Leontaritis, Georgios, "To elliniko ergatiko kinima kai to astiko kratos" in Veremis, Thanos, and Dimitrakopoulos, Odysseas, (eds.), *Meletimata giro apo ton Venizelo kai tin epoxi tou*, Filippotis, Athens, 1980.

Leontidou, Lila, *Poleis tis siopis: ergatikos epoikismos tis Athinas kai tou Peraia, 1909-1940*, Athens, 1990.

Liakos, Antonis, *Ergasia kai Politiki stin Ellada tou Mesopolemou: To Diethnes Grafeio Ergasias kai i anadisi ton koinonikon thesmon*, Athens, Idrima erevnas kai paideias tis emporikis trapezas tis Ellados, 1993.

Liata, Eftichia, *Times kai agatha stin Athina (1839-1946): Mia martiria apo to katasticho tou emborou Christodoulou Efthimiou*, Athens, 1984.

_____, *I Serifos kata tin Tourkokratia*, Idrima erevnas kai paideias tis emporikis trapezas tis Ellados, Athens, 1987.

Loizos, Peter, *The Greek Gift: Politics in a Cypriot Village*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1975.

Louis, James, "Taking Melodrama Seriously: Theatre, and Nineteenth-Century Studies", *History Workshop Journal*, no 3, 1977.

Lughod, Lila Abu and Lutz, Catherine (eds.), "Introduction", in *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Luth, Christiana, *Mia Daneza stin avli tou Othona*, Ermis, Athina, 1981.

Lynd, Helen Merrel, *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, New York, Harcourt, 1958.

Makris, A., *Statistikai Meletai*, Athens, EKKE, 1972.

Mansolas, Alexandros, *Apografi tis poleos ton Athinon*, Parnassos, 1881.

Marcus, Greil, *The Dustbin of History*, London, Picador, 1996.

Marmaras, Manolis, "The effect of the flow of Asia Minor refugees in intensive building activity of inter-war Athens" in *O xerizomos and i alli patrida: Oi prosfigoupoleis stin Ellada*, Etairiea Spoudon Neoellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paideias, Athens 1997.

_____, *I astiki polikatikia tis mesopolemikis Athinas*, ETVA, Athens, 1991.

Mason, Mary, "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers", in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980.

Maza, Sara, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France: The Uses of Loyalty*, Princeton University Press, 1983.

McBride, Theresa, *The Domestic Revolution, The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920*, Holmes and Meier, 1976.

McClintock, Ann, *Imperial Leather: Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, London, Routledge, 1995.

Mears, Elliot Grinnell, *Greece Today: The Aftermath of the Refugee Impact*, California, Stanford University Press, 1929.

Miliarakis, Antonios, *Ipomnimata perigrafika Kikladon nison: Andros, Keos*, Athens, 1880.

_____, *Ipomnimata geografika ton Kikladon Nison: Amorgos*, Athens

Mitterauer, Michael, "Servi nelle Alpe", *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 68, no 2, 1988.

Morgenthau, Henry, *I was sent to Athens*, Doubleday, Doran and Company, New York, 1929.

Morrison, Toni, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature" in Terry Lovell (ed.), *Feminist Cultural Studies II*.

_____, *The Bluest Eye*, London, Vintage, 1999.

Naskos, Ioannis, *Astinomikai Diatakseis*, Athens 1919.

Nirvanas Pavlos, [Metathesis enallax], *Estia*, 31 August 1926.

_____,"The Skivvies", *Estia*, 9 July 1926.

_____, "Human beasts of burden", *Estia*, 25 June 1926.

_____, "The little slaves", *Estia*, Friday 9 July 1926.

October 30, 1945.

Ogilvie, Sheilagh C., "Proto-industrialization in Europe", *Continuity and Change*, vol.

Oikonomidis, Dimitris, "The status of women in popular customs", *Deltion Ellinikis Laografikis Etaireias*, vol. 23, Athens 1972.

Owen Hughes, Diane, "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe" in Marion A. Kaplan (ed.), *The Marriage Bargain: Women and Dowries in European History*, New York, Harrington Park Press, 1985, pp. 13-58.

Palmer, Phyllis, *Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920–1945*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989.

Papadopoulos, Marios, "Children's courts in Greece", *To Paidi*, no 49-50, May-Aug. 1938

Papadopoulos, Nikolaos, "The health booklets", *Sosialistiki Zoi*, no 32, June 1931.

Papastratos Georgios, *Ai astinomikai diatakseis kai apasai ai epi ti vasei afton ekdotheisai apofaseis tis Diefthinseos Astinomias Athinon*, Athens, 1937.

Papastratos, Georgios, *Apasai ai astinomikai diatakseis*, Athens, 1946.

Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*, California, Stanford University Press, 2001.

Paspatis, A. G., *Peri tou Graikikou nosokomeiou ton Epta Pirgon*, Athens, 1863.

Passerini, Luisa, "A Memory for Women's History: Problems of Method and Interpretation, *Social Science History*, vol. 16, no. 4, Winter 1992, pp. 669-692.

_____, "Memoria, autobiografia, oralità: il problema della presentazione delle interviste dal punto di vista storiografico", *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, Anno XXXI, no. 3, July-September 1990.

_____, "Work Ideology and Consensus Under Italian Fascism", *History Workshop Journal*, 8, 1979.

_____, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of The Turin Working Class* (trans. Robert Lumley, Jude Bloomfield), New York, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Pateman, Carole, *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988.

Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press 1994.

Paxinos, Spyros, *Eglima, Astynomia, Koinonia*, Athens 1940.

Petmezas, Sokratis, "I dimografiki siggiria: I defteri fasi tis diadikasias 'dimografikis' metavasis kai i Iperatlantiki Metanastefsi", *I istoria tis Elladas tou eikostou aiona, 1900-1922: Oi aparches*, vol. 1, Athens, Vivliorama, 2000.

Pina-Cabral, Joao de, "Female Power and the inequality of wealth and motherhood in Northwestern Portugal", in Women and Property.

Pitts, Victoria, "Reclaiming the Female Body: Embodied Identity Work, Resistance and the Grotesque", *Body and Society*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1998, pp. 67–84.

Politis, Alexis, *Ideologies kai nootropies, 1830-1880* [Ideologies and mentalities in Greece 1830-1880], University lectures, 1989-1990.

Portelli, Alessandro, "What makes oral history different?", in R. Perks and A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader*, London, Routledge, 1998.

_____, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* New York, 1991.

Psarra, Aggelika, "Feministries, sosialistries, kommunistries: Ginaikes kai politiki sto Mesopolemo" in Giorgos Mavrogordatos and Christos Hatjiiosif, *Venizelismos kai Astikos Eksigronismos*, Panepistimiakes ekdoseis Kritis, 1988, pp. 67-82.

Ramas, Maria, "Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria", in Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane, *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism*, London, Virago, 1985.

Rancière, Jacques, *The Nights of Labour: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (trans. John Dury), Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989.

Raptarhis, Alekos, "Greek women's duty", *Ergasia*, 15, 19-4-1930.

Renieris, Markos, "Ti einai i Ellas?", *Eranistis*, 1942.

Ricoer, Paul, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (trans. K. Mc Laughlin and D. Pelauer), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988.

_____, *Essays On Biblical Interpretation*, edited by Lewis S. Mudge, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1980.

Riginos, Michalis, *Morfes paidikis ergasias sti viomihania kai ti viotehnia 1870-1940*, Geniki Grammateia Neas Genias, Athens, 1995.

Riginos, Michalis, *Paragogikes domes kai ergatika imeromisthia stin Ellada, 1909-1936*, Idrima Erevnas kai Paideias tis Emporikis Trapezas tis Ellados, Athens 1987.

Riley, Denise, *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History*, London, Macmillan, 1988.

Roberts, Robert, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century*, Manchester, 1971.

Rollins, Judith, *Between Women: Domestics and their Employers*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1985.

Romero, Mary, *Maid in the USA*, Routledge, New York, 1992.

Rubin, Gayle, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" in Ranya R. Reiter (ed.), Towards and Anthropology of Women, New York, 1975, pp. 157-210.

S.Z, "The insignificant theatrical production of 1931", *Sosialistiki Zoi*, no 40, February 1932.

Sabean, David, "Aspects of Kinship Behaviour and Property in Rural Western Europe before 1800".

Safilios-Rothschild, Constantina, *Towards a Sociology of Women*, Lexington, 1972.

Sandis, Eva, *Refugees and Economic Migrants in Greater Athens*, Athens 1973.

Sant Cassia, Paul and Bada, Constantina, *The Making of the Modern Greek Family: Marriage and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Athens*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Sarasùa, Carmen, *Criados, nodrizas y amos: El servico doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño, 1758-1868*, Siglo ventiuno editores, 1994.

Sarma,Ursula, "Dowry in North India: Its Consequences for Women" in Renée Hirschon, *Women and Property-Women as Property*, London, Croom Helm, 1984.

Scheff, Thomas, "Socialization of Emotions: Pride and Shame as Causal Agents", in Kemper, Theodore (ed.), *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, Albany, State University of N.Y. Press, 1990.

Schulte, Regina, "Infanticide in rural Bavaria in the nineteenth century" in Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean (eds.), *Interest and Emotion:Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Scott, Joan, "The Evidence of Experience", *Critical Inquiry*, no. 17, Summer 1991, pp. 773-797.

_____, "Women in the Making of the English Working Class", *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1988.

Sevastikoglou, Giorgos, *Aggela*, Athens, Kedros, 1992.

Siambos, G.S., *Dimografiki ekseliskis tis neoteras Ellados, 1821-1985*, Athens 1973.

Skeggs, Beverly, *Formations of Class and Gender*, Sage Publications, London, 1997.

Skouteri-Didaskalou, Nora, *Anthropologika gia to ginaikeio zitima*, Athens, Politis, 1991 (2nd ed.).

Smith, Sidonie, and Watson, Julia, (eds.), *De/Colonizing the Subject*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1992.

_____, (eds.), *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1998.

Sommer, Doris, "Sacred Secrets: A Strategy for Survival" in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (eds.), *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1998.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Gary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, London, Macmillan, 1988.

Stallybrass, Peter, and White, Allon, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London, 1986.

Stanley, Liz, (ed.), *The Diaries of Hannah Cullwick*, Virago 1984, p. 282.

_____, *The Auto/Biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Autobiography*, Manchester University Press, 1992.

Steedman, Carolyn, "The Price of Experience: Women and the Making of the English Working Class", *Radical History Review*, no. 59, 1994, pp. 108-119.

_____, *The Tidy House: Little Girls Writing*, London, Virago, 1982.

_____, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives*, London, Virago 1986.

_____, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930*, London, Virago, 1995.

_____, "A Weekend with Elektra", *Literature and History*, vol. 6, no. 1, Spring 1997, pp. 17-42.

Svolou, Maria, *Ginaikes kai koinoniki pronoia*, Athens 1922

Taylor, Barbara, "Religion, Radicalism and Fantasy", *History Workshop Journal*, no. 39, Spring 1995.

Taylor, Pam, "Women Domestic Servants 1919-1939", *Stenciled Occasional Papers*, no. 40, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1976.

Theodoropoulos, Spyros, "On the hygienic conditions of the working population", *Ergasia*, 18, 6-5-1930.

Thirsk, Joan, and Thompson, E. P., Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe 1200-1800, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976.

Thompson, E. P., *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin 1980 (Ist ed. 1963).

_____, "Peculiarities of the English" in *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, London, Merlin Press, 1978.

Thornton Dill, Bonnie, *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class*, Garland Publishing, New York, 1994.

Tilly, Louise, "Does Waged Domestic Labor Have a Future?", *International Labour and Working-Class History*, no. 39, 1991, pp. 61-73.

Tsaldari, Lina, "Committee for the status of women U.N., IV in Lake Success, 1950". *Ethnikai kai koinonikai politikai prospatheiai* vol. 1, *To paidi kai i ginaika*, Athens, 1967.

Typaldos-Kozakis, Georgios, *Report of the workings of the administrative committee of Amalieion orphanage*, 1888.

Tzokas, Spyros, "Refugee Settlement in Kaisariani", in *O xerizomos and i alli patrida: Oi prosfigoupoleis stin Ellada*, Etairiea Spoudon Neoellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paideias, Athens 1997.

Valaoras, Vasileios, "A Reconstruction of the Demographic History of Modern Greece", *Milibank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, vol. 38, no.2, 1960.

Valenze, Deborah, *The First Industrial Woman*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995.

Varikas, Eleni, *I gennisi mias feministikis sineidisis stin Ellada, 1833-1907*, Idrima Erevnas kai Paideias tis Emporikis Trapezas tis Ellados, Athens,1987.

_____, *Me diaforetiko prosopo: Filo, diafora, oikoumenikotita*, Athens, Katarti, 2000.

Varouksaki, Aikaterini, *Oikiaki Oikonomia*, Athens, 1923.

Vasileiadis, Spyridon, 1873

Vergopoulos, Kostas, *To agrotiko zitima stin Ellada: I koinoniki ensomatosi tis georgias*, Exantas, Athens, 1975.

Vernier, Bernard, "Emigration et dérèglement du marché matimonial", *Actes de la recherche en science sociàles*, no 15, Juin 1977.

Vervenioti, Tasoula, "To dilima kai to timima ton ginaikon tis Antistasis", *Historica*, vol. 16, no. 31, December, 1999.

Vervenioti, Tasoula, *I ginaika tis antistasis*, Athens, Odysseas, 1994.

Vogiatzoglou, Olga, "Industrial establishments in Nea Ionia", in *O xerizomos and i alli patrida: Oi prosfigoupoleis stin Ellada*, Etairiea Spoudon Neoellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paideias, Athens 1997.

Walkowitz, Judith, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, Virago, 1994.

Wall, Richard, Robin, Jean and Laslett, Peter (eds), *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Whitehead, Ann, "Women and Men, Kinship and Property: Some General Issues" in Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Women and Property-Women as Property*, Croom Helm, London, 1984, pp. 176-191.

Williams, Raymond, *The Country and the City*, London, Croom Helm, 1973.